

**IMPLEMENTING INTENSIVE READING STRATEGIES AND COOPERATIVE BASE  
GROUPS ON EFL CLASSES ON THIRD GRADERS FROM INSTITUTO TÉCNICO  
SUPERIOR**

**ANA MARÍA GALLEGO OSPINA**

**ALEJANDRO LÓPEZ LAVERDE**

**Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira**

**Facultad de Bellas Artes y Humanidades**

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### **Abstract**

The main aim of this classroom focuses on promoting the skill of reading through the employment of intensive reading strategies while interacting in cooperative base groups. It was developed with 40 third graders at the Instituto Técnico superior in the city of Pereira. The data which supports this project was collected through journals, observations and students' artifacts such as reading comprehension activities. The implementation of this project was conducted through the use of the backward approach, for immediate results, and the PPP methodology (presentation, practice, and production) to expose learners to input, rehearse the input given, and apply such information in a different task. The two strategies used for this project were: cooperative base group work and intensive reading. The former consisted on forming heterogeneous groups of quite differing proficiency level students, and the latter consisted on exposing learners to readings that demand the reader to identify specific information. The results evidenced that students were able to recognize general grammatical patterns and use them in different tasks after becoming acquainted with such structures. They evidenced the ability to list down the main ideas of texts, yet they did not state those ideas appropriately according to each text. On the other hand, the results also showed that students had some difficulties with discussing the readings, and decided to simply answer, so they could proceed to the next tasks. Furthermore, it was seen that students improved while working with others and they showed support towards others in the development of the reading tasks. In conclusion, we can point out that the employment of cooperative base groups and intensive reading can benefit students' progress in terms of reading comprehension and recognition of vocabulary.

### **Resumen**

Este proyecto de aula se enfoca en promover la habilidad de lectura a través del uso de la estrategia de lectura intensiva y la interacción en grupos de base cooperativa con 40 estudiantes del Instituto técnico superior de la ciudad de Pereira. Los datos que soportan este proyecto fueron obtenidos a través de diarios, observaciones y artefactos (actividades) de los estudiantes tales como actividades de comprensión lectora. La implementación de este proyecto se llevó a cabo mediante el uso del aprendizaje inverso (backward approach) para resultados inmediatos, el uso de la metodología PPP (presentación, práctica y producción) para exponer a los estudiantes a la información, practicar la información enseñada y aplicar dicha información en una actividad diferente. Las dos estrategias usadas para este proyecto fueron: grupos de base cooperativa y lectura intensiva. El primero consiste en conformar grupos heterogéneos con estudiantes de muy variados niveles de suficiencia en lengua inglesa. El último consiste en exponer a los estudiantes a lecturas que demandan al lector identificar información específica. Los resultados obtenidos mostraron que los estudiantes fueron capaces de reconocer vocabulario y estructuras gramaticales de los textos a los cuales fueron expuestos y usarlos en diferentes actividades después de acostumbrarse al uso de estas estructuras. Los estudiantes evidenciaron la capacidad de listar las ideas principales de los textos usados, aunque no expusieron estas ideas de la manera apropiada de acuerdo a cada actividad. Por el contrario, los resultados demostraron que los estudiantes tuvieron algunas dificultades al momento de discutir las lecturas trabajadas y optaron por simplemente contestar las preguntas planteadas para poder proceder con las actividades próximas. Además, se pudo ver el mejoramiento que los estudiantes tuvieron durante el trabajo en grupo, y mostraron el apoyo hacia los miembros del equipo en el desarrollo de las actividades

de lectura. Para concluir, podemos señalar que la implementación de los grupos de base cooperativa y la estrategia de lectura intensiva pueden beneficiar el progreso de los estudiantes en términos de comprensión lectora y reconocimiento de vocabulario.



## **1. Introduction**

Through the years knowing English has become one of the most important aspects that matter in the personal and professional life of people. For this reason, many different strategies have been employed by the government in order to improve the proficiency level of English in schools in our country. Having abilities in English not only helps children and people to improve in the learning process, but it also, opens different doors for the growing as a person and allows people to live in a world full of adventures and learning experiences. Taken this into consideration, this project was developed with 40 third graders from 8 to 11 years, aiming to improve their proficiency level in reading in English and cooperative working skills.

The results gathered from the implementation of this project, pointed out that positive and some not so positive aspects. In relation to the positive factors that could be seen after the instruction of the project, it is meaningful to remark the advancement that was noted from students when interacting with texts and reading tasks. This was noticed through the recognition of vocabulary and grammatical structures and answer of some basic comprehension questions. Besides, the advance that student had in the group working and interaction with others that was developed through the project. It was seen how students relied on each other abilities and knowledge for the development of reading tasks.

Regardless of the favorable results, there were some that were not that favorable in terms of students' behaviors during the classes and the demanding level of the texts employed. It was seen that students presented different behavior during the lesson, but in some of them, the behavior avoided the development of the classes and activities as they were planned. Also, there

some difficulties with the proper level of the texts used, sometimes students expressed that they were very challenging and others that they were not that demanding to be developed.

In the following section explain further about the previously mentioned. This document is divided into different sections that exemplify how this project come to be: justification, objectives, conceptual framework, methodology, results, limitations, conclusions, and ethical considerations.

## 2. Justification

With time and the arrival of new technologies the world has faced different challenges, and in order to overcome them, it had to adjust and modify the way in which things were done. One of the most significant changes is the takeover that English has over the world, especially in the learning context. Knowing how to speak, read, write and understand what others say in English is beneficial for the twenty-first century learners. Having this knowledge will allow the learners to have more opportunities in the working area or if they want to apply for any scholarship abroad, these are just some of the benefits being proficient in the English language could bring. For these reasons, Colombia has created several strategies for the improvement of methodologies and practices in learning and teaching English at elementary and secondary education, one of these strategies is “Colombia bilingüe English Kit” which is a pedagogical tool that aims to strengthen the methodologies and practices in the classroom for the teaching of English in the Colombian public institutions.

The Colombian public education has plans for the improvement of English in schools such as Colombia Very Well, Colombia bilingüe English kit and the national bilingual program. The latter focuses on forming teachers and English teaching programs to improve the level of the English teachers that they prepared. One of the main issues that Colombian education, especially in English, has had is that the programs and plans that are designed and implemented focus only on students that are in high school or elementary, leaving the early childhood students neglected. There are not many programs that guide or advise teachers on how to start exposing kids to English; this has caused low proficiency levels in English and the fear when they face it for the first time.

Reading is an action in which two or more people share thoughts, opinions, anecdotes and so on, it usually impacts others in different ways. Reading in EFL is the same as reading in the mother tongue; there is a process of recognition of words their meaning, then an internalization of ideas the reader can omit, refute or take into account, agree or disagree with (William 1984). When students begin to interact with texts, stories, anecdotes in English, they will learn new vocabulary, the spelling of words, content of any kind and they will start to develop the tendency of doing it for different purposes (Smith, 1993).

The project came as a result of the low scores obtained in standardized tests such as PISA, this problem has its roots in the poor reading habits Colombians have and transmit to their children, as pointed out by Gamboa and Reina (2006) in their research, that showed that between 2002 and 2005 in Colombia, the habits of reading daily reached a low point, and people started to read of others source instead of books. Additionally, this issue illustrates why children inherit a sense of reluctance to reading in their mother tongue, which intensifies when they encounter readings in other languages. According to the Ministry of Education, in 2009 the evidence tests provided showed that 25% of the evaluated population reached the minimum level (two), 18% of the population reached levels three and four. These results show that students have a better capability to identify the key aspects of texts that are connected to different knowledge and personal experiences. Moreover, the PISA test evidenced that “Latin American students can solve simplistic problems in known situations through a process of trial and error to derive the best choice”. This can be observed in the results from 2012 in reading showing that Colombia got 403 points, which is 91 points below the average in reading for the countries in the **OECD**

**(Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development)**, and 153 points below the highest score in reading of 2012 (PISA, 2012).

PISA mide el rendimiento de los estudiantes en puntos a partir de una escala arbitraria. Por esta razón, el puntaje solamente puede ser interpretado una vez que se revise en un contexto determinado, lo cual sucede generalmente en la comparación entre distintos países. Por esto, los informes de la OCDE se presentan generalmente en forma de listas de países o escalafones. (OECD).

Regarding the evidence mentioned before, this project aims to generate an improvement in students' reading skills and encourage reading habits through the exposure to texts while working in cooperative-based groups. In addition, this project considers that reading skills need to be addressed since reading is a receptive skill necessary to improve students' proficiency in the target language and considers the obstacle that individually facing a texts presents to students which supports the conception of better results in reading when using cooperative group work

### **3. Objectives**

#### **3.1. Learning objectives**

##### **3.1.1. General.**

To identify the most relevant information from readings through intensive reading strategies when working cooperatively.

##### **3.1.2. Specific.**

To recall the main sentence from a reading and restate it in their own words based on what students can recall.

To list down the main ideas as they appear in short texts.

To learn how to work cooperatively to obtain collective results.

#### **3.2. Teaching objectives**

##### **3.2.1. General.**

To implement strategies for students to work cooperatively in readings that demand information exchange for better understanding.

##### **3.2.2. Specific.**

To create cooperative base groups to promote discussion among students about the texts they interact with.

To instruct cooperative study group sessions to facilitate the understanding of texts and their main components (plot, gist, characters).

#### **4. Conceptual framework**

Reading and cooperative learning are key terms for the classroom experience. The constructs of reading and cooperative learning will be explained taking into consideration authors such as Williams, Walker, Johnson, and Holubec and what these authors argued about each concept. This compilation of concepts will explain how the process of cooperative learning articulated with the techniques for teaching reading contributes to the learning of such skill and why cooperative learning is considered to be an effective approach to cope with the demands reading proposes.

##### **4.1 Theory of reading focused on the purpose**

Considering the importance of reading in the learning process, it is appropriate to set the foundations of what reading is by addressing academic definitions of such skill, explaining how it affects the learning process of students when it is used in cooperative learning environments, and describing the types of reading that are relevant to the academic field regarding the aim of this study.

The first conception of reading is introduced by William (1984) arguing that reading is a process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written. From this, it is possible to understand that reading was regarded as a mere procedure of decoding what the writer stated in the text in a single-dimensional process where no intended message is perceived other than the one explicitly stated with words. Evolving from this point of interpretation for reading Walker (1992) proposes that reading is a communicative procedure in which readers share their existing knowledge with information conveyed in text. This means, that reading accordingly implies

common knowledge from the reader and the author to make understanding the intended message possible for the reader. Finally, the last interpretation of this concept was stated by Smith (1993) claiming that reading is an act of communication in which information is transferred from a transmitter to a receiver, which seems to have a strong relationship with the communicative approach, rather than being a process of decrypting meaning of a source and understanding it beyond what is written.

This conception proposed by Smith contributes to the idea already presented by Williams regarding exchange and communication beyond understanding language forms as he proposes that reading involves interaction between the reader, the text, and the intended message by the writer. This can be interpreted as the communicative connection that a text establishes with the interpreter, and how new information is connected to the existent one.

After analyzing the sources defining reading, we consider that our foundation for this study is best oriented towards the conception of Smith (1993) which states that reading demands to receive information from a transmitter and analyze it. This definition gives us insight on what we consider reading requires to the students, and gives room for the aspect of working cooperatively to possibly enhance the process of reading effectively. These factors can contribute to the development of students' social skills and to express their ideas about a specific topic that is being covered, students can work together analyzing what they have read to convey their own meaning about it. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to our study to address the definition by Walker (1993) stating that reading means to have a common foundation of knowledge with a text to be able to understand it, and we consider that such definition can provide meaningful information to our study as it implies an exchange of input and this could be improved through the use of



cooperative learning, given the fact that students can provide substantial data to others while developing an activity together. Moreover, reading interpreted as a process of transmission can be integrated with the use of types of reading to cope with the necessities of the possible tasks each text would demand.

## **4.2 The types of reading**

### **4.2.1 Intensive and Extensive reading.**

The interaction between a reader and the authors is an action in which the reader gives meaning to what the authors stated and described, interpreting not just words, but also pictures that grant to achieve the meaning. In order to make this interaction to happen, two processes have to be conducted, these processes are intensive and extensive reading, which are recognized as the most significant types of reading.

Reading, regarded as a process that allows the language user to acquire information and extract meaning from the text, can be carried out in different ways, depending on the type of strategy to develop and the focus that it has, it demands a specific type of reading to be implemented. The first explanation found about the types of reading was presented by Pug (1978) and Lunzer and Gardner (1979). The authors pointed out that intensive reading involves extracting the necessary information. This conveys that the act of intensive reading can be exemplified by the simple act of a person reading the headings of a newspaper looking for something of their interest. With regards to extensive reading Long & Richards (1978) argued that it occurs when students read amounts of high-interest material, usually out of class, concentrating on meaning, reading for gist and skipping unknown words. This interpretation

refers to the moments in which students carry out reading on their own, implementing books of their preferences, that are relevant to them, and doing it in their spare time without academic pressure. In consideration for this type of reading to be successfully achieved it is necessary to first interact with intensive reading, therefore, students will have already had the experience of creating meaning from the input given, conceding to the students to perform in a more proper manner when they have to interact with text that they prefer.

Both types of reading are significant to our focus of study; hence the use of these types of reading is an important part of the development of our project. With the application of both types; the process of reading will be carried out in a systematic manner that grants students the opportunity to take the best from each type.

### **4.3 Strategies for reading**

#### **4.3.1 Scanning and skimming.**

The employment of intensive and extensive reading must be done in a systematic form with regard to the stage of exposure and improvement that the students have had. In the direction of this to happen, it is suitable to employ strategies such as scanning and skimming that are pertinent to the achievement of the goals set.

Taking a different perspective towards reading strategies Langan (1993) presents the strategy of scanning, the author describes that scanning reading is used to find a fragment or piece of information. This means that when the reading process starts, the focus of the reader is on specific parts of the text, where the desired information is. When students work with this system, they go deeper into the topic that is essential for them, enjoying the process, they

develop and doing it in a passionate way when it is done for pleasure. With respect to skimming Henry (2008) suggests that it is a process by which students quietly gather the most important information. This can be interpreted as the act of searching in the text for the most meaningful information that will allow the reader to summarize the whole text in short time, without mentioning specific events that happened. In this strategy, students start a search for a specific knowledge that they found appropriate for the task they are developing.

As a result of the interpretation of the different ideas proposed by the authors, we consider that extensive reading as pointed out by Long & Richards (1987), is the most suitable to be implemented, due to the fact that it provides students control over their reading habits in terms of preference. Besides, with the use of extensive reading, students can enjoy more the process of reading. In addition, it is also important to highlight skimming reading, given the fact that it works for the purpose of reading and can help the students to develop techniques to gather knowledge about a text that can be implemented in the extensive reading. Students can go through different texts that they like, looking for the main idea of them.

#### **4.4 Strategies for teaching reading**

##### **4.4.1 Scaffolding and reading aloud.**

The strategies employed for reading gives to the students' different options of how to construct their own meaning about a topic, for this reason, it is necessary to be aware of the strategies that can be used in teaching reading, these strategies worked very diverse, but both of them help in the process of reading, for this reason, it is significant to mention of scaffolding and reading aloud support the process. Setting the foundations of what reading is and what it

involves, it is necessary to explore what scholars propose as strategies to teach reading effectively in the classroom.

The first strategy presented is introduced by Ford and Optitz (2008) arguing that teachers need to scaffold pupils during guided reading; this is because "demonstration is the primary purpose of guided reading". This means that the process of guided reading is more effective when dividing the task into simpler steps for students, such process articulated with the teacher's model will provide them better input and give them a more proficient model to imitate. Another essential point to the strategies for teaching reading is proposed by Cho and Choi (2008) stating that reading aloud can increase pupils' interest towards reading in English. This conception of reading aloud as a strategy to increase interest is understood as an opportunity for learners to improve when they read, as they read more they can become more aware of the mistakes they make and correct them with the help of the teacher. Another relevant aspect is the stress; if they read to an audience, the stress level could increase when reading. However, they can also have a sense of improvement when reading to an audience if they pronounce accurately, are fluent and read at a natural pace, causing a sense of success when achieving a goal they have set to improve their reading.

As a result of the contribution done by Neugebauer and Corrie-Rubin (2009) regarding the strategies used for enhancing the reading process, the concept itself had evolved and had contributed with more insight about this important theme, allowing people to get acquainted with this. Neugebauer and Corrie-Rubin (2009) argue that reading aloud encourages students to share their own points of view, background knowledge about life and express family and personal stories for the purpose of increasing their literacy. This contribution included important aspects

of students' learning process such as meaningful experiences and personal stories, which influence the development of the students' reading, making it more than a mechanical process of accuracy and fluency, a personal process where emotions play a role in the learning and make it more significant for students, this contribution seems to depend on the age of the students. However, it seems applicable to certain scenarios. These factors help to students' interpersonal skills, granting students to find a base in others. Besides, it permits that students can relate to others and based on this through working together they can construct knowledge.

In the final analysis of the strategies to teach reading, it is important to realize that the most relevant reading strategy is suggested by Neugebauer and Corrie-Rubin (2009) stating that reading aloud improves students' narrative skills and fosters their desire to express personal memories through reading. For this reason, reading becomes a fundamental linguistic aim to teach as it is one of the receptive skills that permits the acquisition of new knowledge, the analysis of ideas and it is necessary for a complete learning development during the lesson.

#### **4.5 How to teach reading during the stages of a lesson for effective improvement**

In the process of teaching effective reading, there has to be a division among the stages of a lesson for it to be successful. Following certain steps integrated with a goal for students, and the use of reading strategies during each stage can help students achieve better outcomes. Wallace (1992) suggests three stages that must be implemented in the reading process. The first stage is pre-reading, that consists of activating students' background knowledge on the topic that the reading is going to be about, allowing students to start the cognitive process and start figuring out the possibilities of what the reading is about. The second stage is while-reading, the aim of

this stage is to make students reflect on what they text is telling them, also it invites students to be open-minded about what can happen in the text context, contrasting it with their own context. The last stage is the post-reading stage that comprises the increment of the students' awareness about the topic covered, in order to integrate their previous knowledge and the new knowledge, to obtain and create their own knowledge.

As shown above, in order to have a successful and meaningful reading process, it is necessary to implement the reading stages proposed by Wallace (1992). This will allow students to obtain the gist of what they read, derive their own conclusions, and create their own perspectives towards the text and its topic.

#### **4.6 Cooperative learning for use in the classroom**

The construct of cooperative learning explains the process in which students work together under the same conditions, in order to achieve a shared goal, providing help to each member of the team disregarding each student's level of proficiency.

The first conception of cooperative learning in this study was introduced by Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec (1994) arguing that cooperative learning is presented as a technique that helps raise the achievement of all students; helps build positive relationships among students; and gives students experiences necessary for healthy social, psychological, and cognitive development. This refers to cooperative learning as a strategy that allows students to improve on problem-solving skills, and bonding with each other, which permits that they can share experiences and knowledge. Having in mind that cooperative learning support students' social and psychological state, it is significant to carry out this type of strategy in the classroom due to

the fact that learners need to interact with others to develop such skills. This means that they need to think about the topic bearing in mind what others may know and think about it even if it is different from their perspective, creating among the students' different viewpoints.

In addition to the conceptions mentioned above, Adams and Hamm (1996) pointed out that cooperative learning is an important instructional procedure. This means that with the implementation of cooperative learning, good outcomes can be achieved, and in order to accomplish this, it is necessary to take into account some steps that will guide the learners throughout the process. As explained by the author, with regards to cooperative learning seen as a procedure, it is necessary to establish some stages that must be completed by the learner while working with others. This is pertinent given the fact that if students failed in a specific stage, they cannot go to the other stage and in this way the teacher and students will be aware of what part of the process is not providing the outcomes that are expected, and it would allow the teacher to change what is not properly working and to implement new strategies.

Equally important, Johnson and Johnson (1999) postulated that cooperative learning happens when students work together to accomplish shared learning goals. Based on the ideas of the author, cooperative learning can be understood as the act in which learners interact with each other, creating their own assumption regarding an established topic, generating some outcomes from this interaction with others. In view of this, students need to support each other in the construct of the knowledge, considering the prior information that all the members have regarding a theme, providing new insight to the partners and correcting the misconceptions they may have to reach the main goal that consists of creating a unique meaning that is suitable for all them.

To conclude, it is pertinent to address Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1994) who add to the conception of cooperative learning aspects such as students' relationships, students' achievements, and social health. Consequently, this consolidation by the authors results significantly more enlightening with the aim of this study than other conceptions before mentioned, considering the bonds that students can create with each other and the objectives achieved by all, students will feel more comfortable working with the partner that they perceive as a confident person and that supports them during the process of learning. It can be concluded that the focus of this construct is based on the contribution students can do to others.

Nevertheless, Adams and Hamm (1996) add to the conclusion the importance of cooperative learning as an instructional procedure in the learning process, making cooperative learning the most suitable strategy for learning given that it provides interactive learning environments, and adaptation possibilities to different ways of implementing it in various contexts. Based on this, it can be inferred that throughout the application of cooperative work, Students take advantage of the different aspects that this involves and deals with, like the teamwork and the creation of shared meaning.

#### **4.7. Types of cooperative learning**

##### **4.7.1. Formal, Informal and based groups.**

This study explores the possible advantages of one technique known as cooperative learning, more specifically its types, for improving students' opportunity to contribute to others learning and gain knowledge on the same extent.



Addressing the types of cooperative learning, Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (2008) posited three definitions for the types of cooperative learning. The first concept is formal cooperative learning, and consists of students working together, for one period of several weeks, to achieve shared learning goals and complete jointly specific tasks and assignments. Based on the ideas presented by the authors, it can be interpreted that formal cooperative learning is focused on the development of selected tasks and activities, which have to be conducted for a period of time in order for students to achieve them. In the same way, the same authors suggested another type of cooperative learning that is informal cooperative learning, and it is based on having students working together to achieve a joint learning goal in temporary, ad-hoc groups that last a few minutes to one class period. The authors' construct mentioned before refers to a specific activity that must be done in class by the students where all have the same goal and that can only be achieved during a specific period of time during the class. The final addition to the construct of types of cooperative learning by Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1999) is described as cooperative base groups, such groups are long term, heterogeneous cooperative learning groups with stable membership. This means that the activities implemented in this type of cooperative learning can be projects where students must spend a considerably long time to achieve the goal that they have set.

In this study, the most suitable type of cooperative learning for the development of our project is the cooperative base groups posited by Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1999) expressing that these groups create a sense of membership and belonging among students, this generates an identity for every group in the classroom, and that learns to cooperate to tackle every weakness the group has. However, it is necessary for the aim of this study to include the

contribution made by Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1999) pointing out the importance of shared learning goals among students in the formal cooperative learning, and the relevance these shared learning goals have on students' sense of belonging regarding specific learning achievements. For this reason, the strategy of cooperative base groups, combined with the implementation of shared learning goals results more useful strategy for students to achieve objectives in learning, contributing and exchanging with others, which fulfills a necessary part in every kid's developmental process of interacting and learning with others.

#### **4.8. Purpose of cooperative learning.**

It has been demonstrated that humans have a gregarious instinct that pushes them to interact, and it is in this interaction or exchange that most of learning happens. For this reason, it is understandable that many psychologists support the fact that forming groups for learning improves such process. Therefore, this study relies on this fact for the implementation of cooperative learning.

The first support for using cooperative learning was postulated by Johnson and Johnson (2009) positing that cooperative learning has advantages over individual work, including: social interaction, the transfer of ideas, and group leadership skills. Using cooperative learning is more advantageous than individual learning, if used correctly. This is based on interpersonal skills for interacting with others, and academic skills for exchanging ideas in a meaningful way without compromising the sense of such ideas. This reason for implementing cooperative had a more significant impact when Kagan (2009) posited that cooperative learning builds relationships, and reduces isolation since it involves getting acquainted, creating one's own identity, providing

mutual support, celebrating diversity, and developing synergy. This conception explains how learners of different proficiency levels can learn from and help each, which is important for more proficient students to help them consolidate their knowledge by explaining or rehearsing with others, and for less proficient learners to improve by learning without an authority figure evaluating them.

To this study it is relevant the use of cooperative learning on the grounds that this strategy can be explained in simple words as the foundation of knowledge itself. That is to many psychologists how knowledge and society as well are constructed, through the use of cooperation by every member of a group that aims to a common objective. Therefore, it is sensible to consider that a situation where learners are set to accomplish a task by integrating efforts, exchanging ideas, negotiating conceptions or possibilities, and learning from each other will benefit such learning process in the sense that they will be constructing knowledge collectively and developing open-mindedness to others' perspectives.

#### **4.9 Implementation of cooperative learning**

The key term explained above focused on the reasons for implementing cooperative learning in the learning process of a foreign language student. Cooperative learning provides several advantages, and for learners to take them is important to know how to conduct this strategy.

In this section will be illustrated how some authors suggest that cooperative learning should be developed in the classroom. Johnson et al (1994) stated that in order to take advantage of cooperative learning, it should be implemented at least 60% to 80 % of time during the class.

Besides, the authors suggested four stages that the teacher has to go through to perform a successful cooperative learning activity. In the first stage that is called pre-instructional decisions, the teacher should select what is going to be carried out later in the lesson, also what is going to be used for it and student's distribution. The second stage is the taskwork and teamwork, in which the teacher shares with the learners what they are supposed to do and how they should behave in order to develop a good activity. The third stage is executing the cooperative lesson and it consists of checking students' performance and give a conclusion to the topic or activity that was implemented. The last stage is the post-lesson activities which focus is on determining how effective was the activity that was developed, the student's work, if they behaved the way it was expected, and what were the outcomes that students achieved.

From a similar perspective to the ideas stated by previous authors Johnson and Johnson (1994) illustrated some aspects that are relevant for the implementation of cooperative learning, this aspect allows teachers to carry out the activities in a more proper way. The researchers suggested that when cooperative learning is taking place in the classroom, students must be part of some phases where they have to play different roles that will be useful for them in the development of the activities. In the first stage, students can have a positive interdependence that allows them to learn with others and at the same time to develop autonomy and be responsible for the work they have. Learners will have a face to face interaction with their partners, which helps them to have an exchange of knowledge and to develop their interpersonal skills.

Indeed, it is the individual accountability what permit students to perform their tasks and be aware of what everyone that has a particular role in the team, and has a specific task has to develop. Regarding group processing each member can have feedback of their process, the tasks

that they do and skills that are developing. The final phase is the social skills grouping in which they carry out interaction and communication to get acquainted with and be aware of the strengths that each member has.

Equally important Johnson and Johnson (1999) claimed that with the purpose of creating a suitable environment of cooperative learning it is important to focus on three different types of cooperative learning activities that can be carried out in the classroom. The first type of cooperative activities that should be considered is the formal cooperative learning in which the main goal is to allow the students to be part of long term projects where they spend more than a week developing the assigned tasks. The informal cooperative learning activities are focused on small groups that carry out a task in a short period of time transferring ideas between each member of the team. In a similar manner, are the base group activities, these are based on long term relationships between students and each member helps with class material to the group.

It has been shown that to successfully develop cooperative learning, it is necessary to decide wisely what type of group activity will be implemented in the classroom. Taking into account what the authors proposed it is relevant for this study to focus on the ideas suggested by Johnson and Johnson (1994) who postulated that through cooperative learning in the classroom, students aside from working together, also have to develop extent positive interdependence up to a certain; due to the fact that each member has a role and some responsibilities with the work they are doing and the people they are interacting with. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to mention the ideas described by Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (2008) that stated that base groups are an important strategy that helps in the classroom as there are established work groups and specific activities that should be done during a period through cooperation by each member regardless of

their proficiency. The authors provide insight on what is relevant to our focus of study with these two strategies for the implementation of cooperative learning, since it highlights the roles that each individual has on a team, the sense of belonging to a group, and the responsibilities that the groups have to enhance the learning process of each member through cooperation.

Throughout this evaluation of concepts, it is important to highlight the different information in which this study is based on. According to what has been discussed, the definitions of reading and cooperative learning appear as the pillars of knowledge for this study and the most sensible way to learn. Equally important are the types of reading and cooperative learning that allow us to be aware of the ones that are suitable for the implementation of this study such as cooperative base groups and the use of extensive and intensive reading. More importantly, how reading and cooperative learning should be implemented in the classroom for effective exchange of perceptions. In order to conduct this study, it is necessary to make adaptations to the concepts discussed above depending on the context to teach. Given the fact that reading is the basis of knowledge, which allows students to learn and acquire new information about several topics when implemented with cooperative learning, reading becomes an opportunity for students to develop interpersonal skills through the cognitive exchange by working cooperatively to decrypt a text, its intended message and the relation it has with the real context in the classroom.

## **5. Literature review**

Interpreting and interacting with someone else's thoughts and points of view is an action that people tend to do when they feel interested in a specific topic or just something randomly.

Reading allows us to interact, interpret, assume, and change our points of view, such things as these can be carried out alone, in pairs and groups. It depends on what the people feel more comfortable with. When the reading process is developed in a cooperative way it has some advantages for the people that conform these groups. The bonding among students while learning together benefits them during the process.

Collaborative learning is a strategy that is commonly used during the learning process, involving different skills and activities that allow students to work together on tasks to achieve together a goal set. Jalilifar (2009) developed a study in which the main focus was how the use of cooperative learning affects college students reading comprehension. The study was conducted under the following questions: are there any differences in terms of reading comprehension quality between EFL learners who are instructed according to the CI and those with whom the techniques of CI are utilized, if so, which one is more effective, and would the use of STAD or GI yield any differences in students' gains in reading comprehension.

The research was implemented with 90 female college students from Dehdasht in the south of Iran, the students were registered for the course of general English that was randomly selected from a sample group of 140 students. The participants were divided into three homogeneous groups, two of them a - b were experimental groups, and the third group c was a control group. Jalilifar (2009) was the teacher of all the groups, each group was seen in a different schedule and had different types of instruction. The study was conducted by 16 weeks and all the session were carried out in the same classroom where the students had class, each class lasted 45 minutes of reading periods. This study covered two units of a regular English

book, but in this case was a reading course, and the main topics were the importance of exercise and the proper ways of giving a speech.

Each group was divided into 10 mixed members, this based on the ability of each member of the test and the result of the pre-test. The teacher started the research with the instructional units with the experimental group A based on what the STAD (students 'team achievement division) proposed. With group B the techniques implemented were based on the GI (group investigations) principles and group C was developed according to CI (conventional instruction) techniques, where the students are expected to complete the exercises in their regular textbook. The lesson of the students that belong to the group A were carried out first by introducing and discussing the material that will be used during the lesson by approximately 15 or 20 minutes, after this the students had to complete some exercises in a worksheet that were planned ahead by the teacher. It is important to mention that this group employed the strategies proposed by the STAD, this technique involves teaching, team study, individual quizzes and team recognition.

The group B that was developed under the GI technique, focused on the investigation, interpretation, interaction and intrinsic motivation. In this group the members were assigned to three-member group based on the common interest that the member shared about subtopic of units. Each group could divide their subtopics into individual tasks and synthesize the information collected among the member to present a group report. The teacher asked to plan a group investigation and after this exchange the ideas through interaction between them. To develop these activities each member read alone in a given period of time and then share the ideas with the rest of the group to gather the information for the reports.



The data collection method implemented in this study was based on the result of the test that the group member took over the two months that the study lasted, for this reason this study is a qualitative one rather than quantitative one, even though the score was based on a series of correct answer that were expected from the students. The results of this study showed that the groups' means were similar on the test though the degree of dispersion varied among the groups. These results concluded that the members that were in the instructional group that employed the STAD technique had better results than the other groups on the post-test. The ones that were conducted thorough investigation technique were in the middle of the scores and the control group were the ones that had the lowest results on the post-test. In order to the results to be clear and fair to all the members of the study, the difference among the participants' scores were investigated by the implementation of the ANOVA system.

It can be concluded that the STAD is more effective than CI in improving the EFL reading achievements. Also, the study showed that cooperative group member helps each other to decode and organize the information to develop the tasks, thus they respond to the demands with an appropriate cognitive skill. It is relevant to highlight the most important outcome that this study had, the simple action of putting students together in a group to work on a task does not mean that there are going to be effective outcomes. On the other hand, to have good results is important to apply the central components of effective CL, these components must be in place to allow the students to feel that the process that they are doing is having positive contributions to the teams and to the whole class.

The previous study is significant to us given the fact that it had shed light on some important aspects that are important for our focus of study. Aspects such as the different ways in

which cooperative learning can be implemented and what type of results it may be obtained from each of them. The most meaningful insight that this study has let on us is that is not only put the students to work in groups that will guarantee that there is any kind of effective results, on the contrary, the group work must be combined with different strategies that will help the students to achieve the goal set and to develop the tasks. Cooperative learning has several advantages for the learning process when this is carried out in a proper way, one of those advantages is that students help each other during the process to develop the tasks they have, to organize ideas and thoughts and to gather information together to come with one that will be useful and that is understandable to all the members of the team and the class.

Considering the importance of reading and its development in the learning process, it is significant to mention the study conducted by Sofyan, Susiani and Yusuf (2015) who tried to find the possible effects of collaborative strategic reading while teaching reading to EFL learners. The study was funded under the questions of: is there any significant difference in reading comprehension ability among students who are taught using CSR and those who are taught the teacher-led reading approach? And what are the students' responses to the implementation of a collaborative strategy in teaching reading comprehension? The study was developed with 67 students in a senior high school in Banda Aceh, 32 students were in the experimental group and 35 in the teacher-led reading group or control group.

To carry out this study, the researchers observed two groups from two points of experimentation. One group was treated with pre-test and the other one with the post-test strategy. In the experimental group was instructed with the collaborative strategic reading while the control group was instructed by the teacher-led reading strategy. The samples were selected

randomly from eight classes at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri. In the experimental group the data collection was divided into three stages, in the first stage called pre-test both groups had to read a descriptive paragraph, in the second stage the experimental group went to the treatment stage or experimental teaching that lasted 5 sessions using the experimental approach. The final stage or post-test was focused on the measure of students' achievements through the sessions and employed 20 questions divided into three sections each one different from the other one. The first questions were about the students' perception of CSR (collaborative strategic reading) instruction, the second set of questions were about the perception students had towards the procedure of CSR and the final questions were about the perceptions on the impact of CSR on English learning mainly in reading. The data found in this study was expressed in a quantitative and qualitative manner.

After the implementation of this study Sofyan et al (2015) found that the employment of CSR was beneficial for student's improvement in their reading comprehension skills. It was found that students' perception towards the use of this strategy was successful and they pointed out that the implementation of it encourages their motivation in learning and comprehension of reading, thus the improvement of reading comprehension skill.

These studies contribute to our project in different ways throughout the insights that show us, but more importantly because first of all, they pointed out the positive effects that group working has on the enhancing and the development of reading skills and how this factor can lead to the development of reading habits among children when they are exposed to this kind of activities in the classroom. Furthermore, one of these studies exposes the benefits that cooperative learning has on reading comprehension due to the fact that while students work

together in their groups, they help each other to understand specific parts and aspects of a text they may not understand by themselves.

Regarding the evidence mentioned before, this project aims to generate an improvement on students' reading skills and encourage reading habits through the exposure to texts while working in cooperative based groups. Also, to develop interpersonal skills through the development of lessons that will help students when they have to face society and it implies to live within it.

## **6. Methodology**

When talking about a classroom project, we attempted to cover some important aspects that were involved in the development of this project. Aspects such as where it would be carried out, who the people involved in it would be, what sequence it would follow, how it would be implemented, and how it would be assessed to collect the data.

### **6.1 Context**

This classroom project was developed in a public institution in the city of Pereira, this is Instituto Técnico Superior. To make this possible the teaching program came to an agreement with four public institutions that provide the practitioners realistic scenarios for them to analyze primary children's responses and reactions towards the procedure conducted during the guided teaching practicum. The Instituto Técnico Superior where the project was conducted is located in a middle-high neighborhood and has a middle-high socioeconomic status. In this institution there are primary, secondary and higher education that work as a special program. The institution counts with a total of 3000 students in primary and secondary. There are no English teachers in

primary, and the English subject is not subjected to a formal English teaching curriculum suggested by the government; for this reason, the practitioners of the Licenciatura conducted the practicum there. In secondary there is one English teacher. To implement this project, it was necessary to count with some important features that allow a proper development of it, for instance, participants, some materials such as a classroom in which the implementation of our project was carried out, books for the reading activities, and common classroom supplies (board, markers chairs, desks).

## **6.2 Participants**

The purpose of this section is to inform the reader about the people that was involved in the development of this classroom project. The participants were divided in two groups: practitioners to conduct the procedures of this project, and students to be conducted the methods and activities stated in this classroom project.

### **6.2.1 Students.**

This classroom project was conducted with elementary 40 students, 31 boys and 9 girls, with ages from 7-10 years old, in third grade of elementary school. The students' cognitive capacities were presumably close to the concrete operational stage, according to Piaget (1971) who defines this stage as the capability to understand logical conceptions, interpret concrete analogies, and be able to focus on objective key points that might not be relevant to their thinking but are mandatory to the procedure for solving the problem. In this project developed with elementary children, it was expected to encounter noisy classrooms and poorly organized environments. The expected behavior and personal characteristics to find among students were

very fluctuant-concentrated, strong impulses to discover new things that might not be relevant to the aim of the lesson, and strong desires for attention. The learners showed interests during the English class, and were eager to participate in the activities proposed, especially the cooperative work in their teams. The learners worked in small heterogeneous groups of four members during the implementation of the project; in each session, a different member of the team was the leader of it and that person established and guided the steps of the work they were asked to do.

### **6.2.2. Practitioners' roles.**

The importance of the practitioner's role in the development of the classroom project is one of the key aspects of the project in general. Based on the ideas proposed by Fraenkel and Wallen (1996) there are two types of observation: non-participative and participative observation; the former posits a role for the observer in which he/she only takes notes of the events occurred, and the latter presents a role for the observer in which he/she can interact with the development of the class in a non-intrusive way. In the present project non-participative observation was implemented by the practitioners, one of the practitioners observed while the other was carrying out the activities with the participants. The observer examined the process done in the class, how students responded to what was proposed by the teacher, and how students behaved while working with others, and how they reacted to the reading projects and activities that they were given. Knowing the importance of the roles that we had, and what it involves being in charge of the class, the type of activities carried out, how students worked, whom they worked with, and for how long, it was necessary for us to have a clear idea of our roles so we could develop this project successfully and achieve some of the outcomes expected.

### **6.3. Instructional design**

#### **6.3.1. Design.**

The theory of curriculum explained by Richards (2013) states that there are three possible approaches to organize the curriculum; these approaches are forward, central, and backward. For this classroom project the most suitable approach to follow is the backward approach. This approach consists in the organization of assessment and evaluation as the first step in the curriculum, the content as the second part to fulfil the needs proposed by the task, and the methodology as the last thing to consider in the implementation of the teaching process. This classroom project employed the backward approach considering that the use of cooperative base groups, for long term goals, focuses on the outcomes, and this backward approach focuses as well on the outcomes at relatively long terms.

With the implementation of this approach, we established what the outcomes expected from students would be; this after exposing them to a period of working with intensive reading through the use of cooperative base groups. Additionally, backward approach allowed us to be aware of the content that we had to cover in order for students to achieve the objectives that were set by the teachers. Finally, this approach granted us the possibility of accomplishing the objectives set by the employment of different strategies such as scaffolding, scanning for details, and matching images to meaning to evidence the progress students were making.

#### **6.3.2. Approach.**

The backward approach had several advantages for the learning process, but the most important is that its focus is on the outcomes, allowing the teachers to be aware of the activities

that were necessary to achieve the goals set. To achieve the outcomes set, it was necessary that went lessons through some stages in which specific activities were done in order to have good pacing and synchrony in the lesson.

This classroom project followed the “PPP” strategy for its implementation. Taking into consideration the ideas proposed by Tomlinson (2011) about the “PPP” strategy, he defines it as P1 presentation, P2 practice and P3 production and adds that this is an approach that follows an order that consists in introducing or presenting an item or piece of language, then taking the piece of language into practice and finally producing a piece of language as the one that was presented at the beginning. We followed a sequence during the lessons that allowed students, first to know and interact with the texts step by step with increasing complexity, and permitted students to create their own knowledge based on what was given to them.

As for the practitioners, this “PPP” strategy granted them a specific structure that helps the learning and teaching processes to be conducted focalizing on the weaknesses that students might have in the language, and not overwhelming them with excessive information. Also, the PPP strategy made possible that in the practice stage, practitioners and students interacted with the content to achieve the objectives that students had of creating their own knowledge while the teachers monitored their process and guides them through it. (See appendix 1)

### **6.3.3. Development and implementation.**

This classroom project aimed at testing the effects of cooperative learning strategies, mainly the cooperative based groups approach, which is defined by Johnson and Johnson (2008) as long term groups that share a common linguistic goal; in teaching reading to elementary



children through the use of intensive reading strategies, such strategies are defined in the academic field as the implementation of texts students find interesting to develop reading habits, and the use of texts provided by the teacher to enhance certain skills that are necessary for competent readers. This classroom project intended to instruct elementary students from third grade from Instituto Técnico Superior. This project was carried out 3 hours per week, one and a half hour per class twice a week during a whole semester.

In order to achieve the aim of this classroom project, we conducted sessions in a systematic way following the frame of the PPP model to present topics of readings, practice the language presented, and assess the understanding of the texts presented by the production of items, this way, accomplishing the objectives as proposed by Tomlinson (2011). The most important aspect defined during the first sessions was groups forming for students to work through the other sessions; the next step was to set the ground rules to follow while the sessions were carried out. Finally, the introduction of the texts that students read during the session and the activities they did on each session depending on the main topic that the students and the teacher selected.

#### **6.3.4. Resources or material.**

The materials implemented in this project were semi-authentic texts that involved situations related to the students' context. The use of texts with these topics had several advantages such as the activation of the students' schemata by working with topics they know and can share their opinions about. Also, we implemented texts that proposed real life situations using language adapted to their level to appeal to their experiences for a better engagement. The

use of readings related to youtubers, sports, vacation places, and jobs were remarkably effective for getting their attention and having them actively involved in the reading, given that children's normal behavior is that of a semi-egocentric perspective where his/her thoughts are absolute and their opinion is the core of the topic, having texts they can relate to and short-answer questions to respond from a personal perspective, the procedure resulted quite enriching for the linguistic products results.

#### **6.3.5. Assessment for students.**

When we refer to assessment, we refer to the different ways in which an activity can be performed and can be judged. Brown (1997) points out that assessment is an ongoing process covering different domains. The assessment focuses not only on a single aspect of the language or a specific task, assessment focuses on every single performance, activity, and use of language that learners do in the classroom. In this classroom project matching, multiple choice and charts completion activities were employed for gathering the information needed for the assessment of students and their progress through the lessons. We used several stages for assessing students' progress during the implementation of the project, stages that comprised production such as constructing a poster with the rooms of a house and their names in English; as for instance, reading a short description of current social figures like youtubers and answering specific details about their life based on the descriptions they read; illustration of stories read in groups; and informal assessment events of participation after having read short stories to answer questions asked by the practitioners, which was recorded in several videos for further analysis.

Regarding the availability of materials to implement in this project, it is suitable to employ formative assessment during the implementation of it given the fact that it allows us to make changes during the process in order to get the outcomes expected. Through the implementation of formative assessment, we can be aware of the aspects that we must change and improve during the sessions. Additionally, intensive reading implies time consumption to improve reading in EFL students, and the expected outcomes for this project consist on students developing techniques to decrypt, understand, and demonstrate such understanding of texts that are current and relevant for them.

#### **6.4. Instruments and Reflection**

This classroom project counted with some instruments that allow the practitioners to collect the data from the students in order for practitioners to evidence if the strategies being implemented worked and if they were the most suitable. In this classroom project this collection of information was carried out through the implementation of observations done by the practitioners. Besides this, the practitioners employed journals to gather the most relevant information about the sessions and the students' interaction with the strategies proposed by the practitioners. The last instrument to collect information of the strategies employed is students' artifacts such as matching activities or true and false test.

### **7. Results**

Learners evidenced disposition and motivation towards the implementation of the project. During the implementation, students seemed to get accustomed to work in cooperative base groups and showed willingness towards it. This strategy proved to work with the employment of

readings while working on challenging activities that consisted on reading carefully and looking for specific information in order to know if students comprehend. The following section describes the results and implications that were obtained during the implementation of this project in terms of professional growth, students' responses and learners linguistic outcomes.

### **7.1. Professional growth**

In terms of professional growth, it was found that the group working strategy and the PPP methodology implemented, helped to the exposure to reading tasks and topics, which was useful to the development of the project. However, there were issues that affected the implementation of the project. These issues had to do with the difficulty of maintaining students' attention during the classes, especially during the cooperative work and the employment of the backward approach to conduct the lessons.

#### **7.1.1. Classroom Management.**

In relation to the aspects that were significant during the development of the lessons, some of them help us improve the techniques to approach different classroom management scenarios that we were faced with.

##### ***7.1.1.1. Strength.***

The aspect that we consider to be a strength in relation to classroom management deals with the grouping strategies used in the classes. We consider this aspect to be a strength due to the fact that the grouping strategies employed permitted the conduction of intensive readings without having less proficient students overwhelmed by the difficulty of such readings. This implementation of intensive readings that, quite often, were over the language proficiency level

of some students made effective the use of this grouping strategy. The main purpose of the grouping strategies was to serve as the first resort for students who were confused or in need of help. The first step when forming these groups was a diagnostic test, which was used to complement the groups students would select. This selection made by students was later modified to balance groups based on the proficiency level of the members of each group. We first started with groups of four members; students were the ones who selected who they wanted to work with as supported with the following excerpt from one of the practitioner's journal entries:

*"We found that some participants know more than others, which is good for the cooperative base groups' purpose, but when facing the texts, those participants that do not have the best level will face more problems than others for the development of the activities."*

After we got to know each of the strengths the students had in language aptitude, we started to take some students and integrate them with other groups where they could work better and help others. Based on the students' performance in the initial cooperative base groups, the practitioners decided to form new groups based on students' language proficiency and their success in tasks done during the teaching sessions. The new groups were formed by one or two students with an accepted language proficiency and class performance and one or two students who were on or below the expected level. After doing this, we noticed that the groups were more balanced in order to prompt cooperative work; there were students who needed help, and there were others who could provide that help.

To conclude, we learned that through the employment of this grouping strategies, students help and support each other in the development of reading tasks and different activities,

and can handle better texts in another language (English). Furthermore, we found that the grouping strategies used in the development of this project helped us due to the fact that with it, students were able to conduct the activities proposed; we were able to obtain some information about students' progress and make changes that were useful for the implementation of the activities developed in groups. Besides, we learned that through the implementation of this strategy, the learning and development of interpersonal and learning skills can be fostered.

#### ***7.1.1.2. Challenge.***

The most prominent challenge concerning classroom management was maintaining students' attention. This was due to the constant interruptions students made while the teachers gave explanations and instruction on how to develop activities, which led teachers to explaining to each group separately what they had already explained by means of general instructions, taking more time of what was planned which caused some noise. This is taken as a challenge given the fact that this denied us from conducting some activities as we wanted and how were planned, but most importantly, it did not allow us from carrying out the reading activities in the cooperative base groups as we wanted them to be implemented. This situation made us focus on other aspects rather than reading and its development because we had to constantly call students' attention. It was challenging to keep students' attention while they were in the cooperative base groups developing intensive reading tasks. According to the previous statement, the following extract from one of the journals of the teacher is presented as evidence:

*“It is important to mention that even though most students were participating during the activities, there were some of them that did not continue the activities after beginning, and this*

*caused noise in the classroom, stopping activities and forcing practitioners to persuade them to continue with the aim of the class”.*

As we faced this type of situation, we started to search for strategies such as hot potato game, breathing and movement exercises, which helped us to get students' focus more. These strategies consisted in getting students to interact with their partners in a game or exercise in which they relaxed and used the knowledge they have gathered in previous lessons. This was done by saying some words from the vocabulary taught in the case of hot potato while in the breathing and movement exercises, students were asked to stand up and leave aside for a couple of minutes the reading task and just focus on what the teachers said and the action that were asked to do. After the strategies were implemented, the teachers proceeded to explain once the students were calm and focused on the lesson and gave detailed instructions on how to approach the reading task. In addition, those strategies served to settle them down in order to be able to approach each group without having interruptions or issues with others groups or members.

The situation described above, showed us that it is demanding to maintain learner's attention during the whole lesson; it is even more challenging to have them focused on a reading task carried out individually and specially in groups, as it is expected in the cooperative base groups. For this reason, we consider that it is meaningful to employ strategies such as games and breathing and movement exercises that help to overcome this situation. From the implementation of these strategies, we learned that they can be useful tools to settle students down for a productive development of tasks; those strategies also serve to provide students with opportunities of interaction with the input in a less rigid, more didactic manner. This is useful because sometimes students need to stop interacting with the tasks for some minutes, which

gives time for their brains to make a stop or develop another activity and come back with a fresh attitude towards the reading task.

### **7.1.2. Lesson Planning**

Regarding the issue of structuring lessons to achieve the objectives set, we found positive aspects in the methodology used to plan and conduct the lessons, and there were as well aspects that needed improvement in terms of approach focus and how to adapt it to the objectives of the classroom project.

#### ***7.1.2.1. Strength.***

The factor that we found as a strength is the employment of PPP methodology for an instruction process that helped learners to gradually approach the texts used and the tasks presented based on such texts. The methodology employed helped in the development of the reading tasks because of the way the procedure proposes the lessons to be carried out; it recommends starting from the most basic knowledge to a more demanding one. In our case, the employment of the PPP methodology was done through the exposure to input in the presentation in which learners interacted with some basic knowledge about the main topic before interacting with it later in the reading part. The reason why this aspect is taken as a strength deals with the fact that this methodology allowed us to carry out the classes following an organizational system. In the first stage, some clues and ideas of the topic were given to students; in stage two, they were exposed to the input to finally interact with it in the last stage. This procedure prevented the students from getting lost in the reading section of the lesson. More importantly, this



methodology sequenced the exposure of input from basic to more demanding, granting to the teachers to raise the level of complexity during the lessons.

The previous can be seen in the lesson plans 2, 3, 4 (See **appendixes 7, 8, 9**) that were about animals, professions, and family members. They were planned and conducted with this methodology. These first lessons, in which intensive and cooperative base groups were carried out, were planned and conducted with the PPP methodology in order to start exposing little by little the topic to the students to obtain better outcomes when working on the reading tasks. In these first lessons, it was noticed how we started the class with a vocabulary review to activate students' background knowledge, then, after we noticed that students understood more about the topic and felt comfortable with the reading tasks, we decided to start making the reading tasks a bit more challenging in order to encourage students to work and support their partners.

In conclusion, with the employment of this methodology during the lesson planning, we found that it was helpful in the sense that it allowed students to activate their background knowledge; it as well eased the presentation of a new topic. By conducting the project with this methodology, we learnt that it allows teachers to present the information from easier to more challenging during the lesson which promotes students to work cooperatively in the classes. The cooperative base groups were exposed to the input step by step in order for them to approach the reading tasks as was mentioned before, allowing all members of the group to grasp some meaning from the parts of the lesson and make use of them when dealing with the reading tasks as a group. In this way, students divided the work taking into consideration their own strengths to develop the reading tasks more easily.

#### **7.1.2.2. Challenge.**

During the implementation of this classroom project, the imposition of having to work using the backward approach to guide our lessons resulted in an obstacle to the development of the lessons. The reason is that it required teachers to plan for a goal that could be evidenced and measured right after concluding each class. The nature of this approach went in opposition to the long-term objectives of this classroom project.

This is taken as a challenge in the sense that for the purposes of this project, it was not possible to achieve the outcomes proposed after just one session of implementation. Our goals were more long term ones, so it was not suitable to consider this approach when planning given the fact that its outcomes will never be achieved and the results could not be obtained. After noticing this significant aspect, we decided that it was more suitable to conduct our lessons based on long term goals instead of short ones as the approach proposed. The difficulty raised from the lack of feasibility of exposing children to reading tasks and the demand it has for them to understand or get the idea of the readings. Taken into consideration the previous, an extract from one of the practitioner journal, is presented as evidence:

*“During this lesson, the outcomes that we expected were not achieved, but we could develop some of the activities that we had planned, there are still some difficulties during the reading part.”*

One can notice from the first lesson plan attached in the appendix that the backward approach was taken into consideration for the development of the class. However, adjustments were made once the teacher and the observer noticed that the outcomes expected were not being achieved and that students’ proficiency level was lower than expected. The decision of

establishing long term goals, was made. In this way, the work and objectives proposed were set to be accomplished after a proper process of instruction in which students had the necessary exposure to carry out the reading task as were demanded. An example of this, deals with the change done regarding the development of reading habits among the students that we aimed at in the first classes, to the aim of identifying relevant information from readings through the process of instruction of this project, as is evidenced in the lessons 2,3,4 which were developed with the aim that students were able to recognize animals and match them with their description, identify certain professions and identify members of the family (**See appendixes 6, 7, 8**).

To conclude, this challenge taught us that in some cases it is more suitable to adapt some aspect of the established approach in order to be able to achieve the objectives and goals established. In addition, we learned that sometimes it is wiser to work with long term goals instead of short ones, with the aim of giving learners enough time to achieve them. The issues that we faced with this approach, showed us the importance of adapting to the scenarios in which you develop the classes, to the situations and features encountered on it. The previous due to weakness that students may have in the language and that do not allow them to advance in the reading tasks. Aside from this, we could notice how the establishment of long term goals was more advisable for the development of this project given the students' proficiency level.

## **7.2. Students' responses**

Learners reacted positively towards the English classes and the implementation of the project. It is important to mention that students were used to be exposed to the language and had an English background that allowed us to work during the project and gave us the insight

necessary for the level of the materials to be used. It was meaningful for the project to count with the students' availability to work in the cooperative base groups and their positive attitudes towards the games implemented in classes, especially hot potato. On the other hand, there were some aspects that needed improvement, which dealt with the students' behaviors like the noise and fights they had during the development of the reading tasks in the cooperative base groups, and the fear they had towards the exposure to texts and reading tasks in English, which resulted in necessary adjustments to the activities planned.

#### **7.2.1. Strength.**

One of the most important strengths we could evidence was students' availability to work in cooperative base groups. When working cooperatively, the learners were divided in groups of four people, boys and girls. In each lesson, one of the members was selected as the leader of the group and his/her job was to guide the rest of the group during the activities and the reading process. The learners did not have any issue with this strategy; instead, they enjoyed it. They all wanted to be the leader and guide the others, and in some lessons, they were the ones who pointed out whose turn was. We implemented this with the aim of creating leaders among students and to somehow have more management of the class, due to the fact that the leader was the one who asked the questions to the teachers, avoiding behavioral issue and having all the students asking the same. The students did not have any issue with the tasks assigned or with the group changes we made through the process of instruction of the project, which is found as a strong point that permitted the development of the reading tasks and the project.

The reason why this is considered a strength has to do with the fact that it promoted students' cooperative work during the development of the reading activities in the sense that students were open to work with others in the cooperative base groups without having any problem or being against it at any moment, allowing students to support each other when facing the reading tasks together. It was seen in the group working, how one of the members led the others towards the achievement of the goal that was set in the lesson or activity. This is considered a positive point for us and is taken as a strong point in our favor given the fact that there were not issues when implementing this group working strategy. This factor allowed us to carry out the idea of the development of cooperative base working as was planned, and more importantly, it helped to the exposure to readings and tasks that learners had during the project, and to the exposure to group working strategies, as it is demonstrated on the following extract from a journal from a practitioner:

*"In this lesson, students worked well in their groups. There were not any kind of problems related to teamwork, but there was a problem with the reading of texts, students were confused regarding some of the activities they were asked to do."*

As was seen in the previous statement, after we noticed how well students work together, we decided to take advantage of it, and in order to avoid misunderstanding with the reading tasks, we called each group leader and explained to them carefully, so in this way they knew exactly what to do and tell to their groups, in order for them to decide the manner in which they will develop the reading tasks. In this way, we avoided conflicts related to the instructions of activities and were able to explain in detail to each group the tasks without presenting development issues.

As a conclusion, this strength taught us that group working is a helpful, practical and significant tool to use during the learning process when working with kids due to the support and help that students gave to each other when working in groups. This supported on the willingness they had to work, interact, and learn with others. In the same way, it was meaningful for us and our project to see how teamwork strategies were useful for the development of activities during the classes, like reading a short text, and how students help each other and use their knowledge for the development of different tasks. Not only giving their knowledge, but also guiding and helping other members to understand what they were asked to do and the topic explained. More importantly, this result taught us that when students are willing to work with others without any issue, different activities where students help and support each other with their knowledge can be developed having good outcomes.

#### **7.2.2. Strength.**

The aspect considered a strength in terms of students' response deals with the students' positive boost towards the use of the hot potato game. This game was employed on several occasions, with the aim of getting students' attention and getting information from them in a way in which they did not feel the pressure of being tested by the teachers. Most of the times the game was used, it was at the beginning of the lesson in order to activate students' background knowledge about the previous topics taught. The importance of this strength, deals with the fact that, it allowed us to get to know what learners knew about the topics when it was used for elicitation purposes, what they possible learned during the process of instruction and interaction with readings, and what they remember from readings developed in the cooperative base groups.

Moreover, we were able to see how effective the game was and the positive reaction students had towards its implementation. Students were very open to the employment of the game and to participate in it; they did not present any issues when we employed it for eliciting information from them. This strategy proved to be effective for eliciting information, which seemed to work given that students felt the rush of being put on the spot by an external force that was not the practitioner and were compelled to answer the questions they were asked.

As was expressed before, this game was used to elicit information from students; in one of the lessons (**final lesson**) a review activity was conducted in which we used this game to get the students who participated, to recall what was taught during the development of the project. After one of the students who participated “lost”, he or she had to come to the board and select a category, such as animals, fruits, vegetables, hobbies, and profession, and then write something he or she remembered about it. This strategy worked in multiple occasions, after students read a text and were required to answer a question inquiring specific details of such text, as can be seen in an extract from a journal from one of the practitioners:

*“For this lesson, we decided to start with a movement activity in order to get learners out of their comfort zone and do something different in the classroom. After this, we presented the topic and elicited information from students for the completion of the lesson objectives using the hot potato game to increase the strain levels on students and have them attentive”.*

In the previous statement, it can be noticed how the hot potato strategy was useful for the elicitation of information related to the main topic of the lesson, and how after implementing it with the students, some of the objectives of the lesson were achieved. This strategy proved to be positive for our project because it was meaningful for us to be able to use this game when we

need it during the lesson. In addition, it was helpful for the development of the lessons, in the sense that it was taken as a tool to be employed in different scenarios that most of the times brought positive results. It was significant for the project that the students enjoyed it and were willing to play it without any problem, as was seen in the previous statement.

In conclusion, the employment of this game taught us that students can enjoy and interact with input through different activities that do not have too much pressure on them while doing it. Also, that sometimes students prefer to interact with input and information in more dynamic ways that allowed them to be free and not too control in an educational manner. As well, the implementation of this game shed light on how students can interact with input and at the same time provide it through more spontaneous ways, as was mentioned before, and how if they feel comfortable with the strategy used, they will be able to play it and will encourage others to be part as well.

### **7.2.3. Challenge.**

In relation to the students' responses regarding the implementation of this project, it is significant to mention that their behaviors varied throughout the time that took us to develop the project. The most consistent issues that occurred during the lessons were the noise students made and the disruptive behavior such as fights they had during the implementation of the project. During some of the lessons, students were involved in some verbal and physical fights among them due to the noise some of them made and their desire to play the role of leader of cooperative base team. The reason why this is considered a challenge, deals with the fact that there were some activities that could not be carried out because of the misunderstandings



students had when working in the groups due to fights for the leading role in the cooperative base groups, and for developing the reading tasks in the way they considered was more effective. Due to these issues, there were some problems in terms of comprehension of the reading tasks and its development. These issues were challenging in the sense that it made giving instructions and explanations demanding during the lessons due to the confusion they caused in the cooperative base teams, which forced us to extend the time for explanations to each group individually.

The issue we encountered the most was the noise students did while getting in groups, which sometimes made difficult to give explanations about the activities, to establish rules and give information, and that led to misunderstandings about what to do in some activities, as it might be seen in some extracts from one of the journals from the practitioners:

*“We told the students to write down the professions in their notebooks given the fact that there was too much noise and some of them were walking around...”*

*“Taking into account that there was some noise during the class, some students did not understand what they had to do and they were kind of lost when we started the activity, but we tried to call their attention first to share with them again the instructions.”*

***Extract from an observation done by one practitioner:***

*“During multiples occasions students lost the focus of the class and started to yell things at each other related to their relationship with their partners, this caused noise and interruptions to the class.”*

As can be seen in the previous statements, students’ noise during the classes caused a lot of interruptions, in which teachers had to try to settle them down quickly in order to avoid losing

control of the class. Besides, due to the constant noise students made, they got lost on what they were required to do in the reading tasks because when the teachers were explaining, some of them were very loud, and did not allow to the others to hear or understand what the teachers previously said. In some occasions, some verbal discussions took place in consequence of the noise; some students were bothered by the ones who did not allow them to hear the instructions.

In order to avoid disciplinary issues such as fights, we decided that the best option was not to conduct some activities in which we had already seen how students behave in a not appropriate way. During some of the lessons, students had some behaviors that interrupted the development of the lesson as was planned. Due to these interruptions, we had to manage to control the situation and sometimes let aside one part of the class (reading task) in order to avoid having bigger issues during the classes. There were some lessons in which the behavioral issues caused a negative effect on the students and lessons' outcomes.

To conclude, this challenge taught us that, in some occasions it is difficult to explain, give instructions and try to manage students' behaviors like noise at the same time without having any type of consequences. We learned that sometimes students' noise can affect the lesson in more ways that we can think of and this can lead you to spend more time explaining and giving instructions than in the reading tasks itself. Another significant aspect that this challenge let us is that sometimes it is better to avoid employing some activities in which students' behaviors may make difficult the development of the class; it is suitable to prevent from conducting these type of activities that could lead to disruptive behaviors or bigger behavioral issues.

#### **7.2.4. Challenge.**

One of the aspects found as a challenge in relation to students' responses has to do with the students' fear towards the exposition to texts and readings tasks. This fear was manifested through the students' concerns of making mistakes in the reading tasks and in their lack of English knowledge. Students precipitated before being exposed to the readings and tasks, they expressed that they could not develop the reading tasks because they did not know how to read in English, and did not feel comfortable reading in English. Even before the teachers gave explanations about the reading tasks, students felt that they would not be able to do it due to their lack of knowledge, and they tended to say this without giving a try to the reading tasks. This is considered as a challenge for us, due to the fact that it was demanding to conduct the reading tasks of the lessons, because students were thinking ahead that they were not able to do it, even before they were told what they had to do. Aside from this, when we tried to guide the students or encourage them to read or carry out the reading tasks, they did not feel comfortable due to the language the readings were on, and the possible mistakes they could have in the tasks. For this reason they preferred to do something different that according to them was possible to be achieved without making mistakes.

In the first lesson, where we began to expose learners to short readings to get to know their level of understanding, students expressed that they did not feel comfortable with this type of activity, and that they preferred to do something else in their groups. Also, they shared that they did not know how to read in English, and this situation led us to the not development of some activities. For this reason, we decided to help students in their groups to read or at least to

try and to get them used to this type of exercises. According to the previous statement, the following extract from one of the practitioner journals is presented as evidence:

*“Some participants manifested that they did not know how to read in English and that did not understand what they had to do. Given the problems that were presented during this lesson, we decided to change the aim of the activity, and instead we did something different. First of all, we read aloud to the students and told them just to follow the reading in the same way they did in the previous lesson and then in their groups to underline the words that represent the pictures that were below the text and to look for the structure that one practitioner wrote on the board.”*

As was mentioned above, in some occasions due to the learners fear towards the readings and their low level of English proficiency, we found wise to guide the reading part of the lessons by developing reading aloud sessions, guided reading, giving gist, vocabulary and use pictures from the readings, with the purpose of getting students comfortable with readings in English, and to encourage them to try to do in their groups despite their low proficiency and fears of making mistakes. To conclude, from the experience with this challenge, we learned the importance of encouraging students to face their fears in order to develop the reading tasks proposed, and to have better opportunities when working in class. In the same way, this challenge taught us that sometimes external factors such as students' attitudes and fear can be an obstacle for the development of the readings activities and approach of texts, and this may lead you to carry out the activities in a different way in which all the learners can be involved in the reading activities and lessons. Moreover, we learned that it is important to bear in mind the students' fears and motivation when exposing them to readings in another language and to group working. This in the sense that, they may feel threatened by the knowledge that the readings required to be

developed, or they may not feel comfortable with group working and may be afraid of the consequences that making mistakes in a group can have for them.

### **7.3. Linguistic outcomes**

In terms of the linguistics outcomes obtained from the employment of this project, there were some meaningful insights. It was found that students improved on recognizing and recycling vocabulary to develop reading tasks.

The project had some issues in relation to the established objectives because of the proficiency level of students in English, and the fearfulness of students when exposed to reading texts. In addition, another hardship faced during the employment of this project was the adaptation of assessment instruments to the level of understanding students had, and how to make such adaptations without negatively affecting the effectivity of such instruments.

#### **7.3.1. Strength.**

Regarding the students' linguistic outcomes, it is evident that learners progressed in terms of vocabulary association and recognition related to topics of their interest or topics part of their daily routines. The students were able to recognize vocabulary from the readings which were developed in the cooperative base groups. The vocabulary was related to youtubers, animals, and fruits which allowed us to develop the activities planned. In addition to this, the students were able to interact and identify some basic grammatical structures that were employed in the texts, which students used later on to try to create simple sentences in order to show the comprehension they had about the readings given. This aspect is taken as a strength because it proved that students were able to identify some vocabulary from the readings they faced during the process

of instruction, and this vocabulary recognition allowed them to develop the activities supporting themselves on the previous knowledge they had gathered. Likewise, this factor allowed us to work with the vocabulary and structures in other lessons, and in this way we could provide further instruction of how the vocabulary and grammatical structures are used in readings. A major improvement in students' comprehension of texts is the evident development in their skill to recognize patterns in grammatical structures, and apply such grammatical structures they are acquainted with to different activities that have a commonality with activities they have done. This can be evidenced in the structures used for question response that were implemented in multiple occasions during the implementation of this project.

As was mentioned above, students were able to recognize vocabulary from the readings, like in the case of the activity developed in the lesson 6, in which students highlighted the structure taught at the beginning of the lessons (she has/I have), and identified vocabulary that was taught in previous lesson, like animals and numbers, and that can be seen in appendix 9.

In one the lesson developed, students were faced with short texts about different characters (**youtubers**) that they expressed to be interested on. Students were asked to read in their groups, and to state where each character was from. After doing this, they had to match the image of the character described with their nationality. As can be seen in the appendix 1, students had a short biography that had information such as name, where the youtubers were from and what they posted online, supported by a picture of them. The activity proposed consisted in answering the questions that were written on the board and that were easy to identify in the biography. The questions focused on the name of the youtuber based on the content of the channel, and the place where they were from or live in. From the previous, it can be noticed in

the appendix 1 that even though cooperative base groups did not understand all the information from the text, they were able to develop the reading tasks, taking into consideration the vocabulary that they had interacted with in other lessons.

Similar to what occurred with the activity previous mentioned, occurred with the activity seen in appendix 4 where the students were able to identify and highlight the emotions that the superheroes had and that were taught at the beginning of the lesson. Students identified the emotions what where on the readings and that were taught by the teachers through flashcards, when they were not able to write the answers to the questions. In this activity, the groups were asked to answer some comprehension questions such as who was happy and who was scared, which only some groups were able to do and that can be seen in appendix 2. In addition to this, it can be noticed how students were able to give simple answers to the questions by only using the name of the character based on what they saw in the text.

Even though students were not be able to recognize or understand all the words in a text , they were able to identify vocabulary they interacted with during the lessons and at the same time they answered some simple comprehension questions related, which allowed the teachers to know their understanding of events and important characters of the text.

In some occasions, the activities and reading tasks were too demanding for the students in terms of English proficiency level, due to this factor and students' fear to interact with readings in English, we agreed to change the tasks we had planned to do. Instead of employing comprehension questions that demanded high levels of English proficiency, we decided to work with basic and achievable tasks, and asked learners to identify some important information from the readings that allowed us to know their understanding about the readings.

As a conclusion, after interacting with this strength, we learnt that with an appropriate English level in the activities, the students could be able to interact with the reading tasks and approach them, without having too much comprehension issues. In addition to this, with the implementation of an appropriate English level in the reading tasks and its activities, students obtained benefits from this, such as being able to recognize vocabulary due to the multiple exposure they had with this vocabulary through the readings. Aside from this, we learned that students were able to learn some vocabulary and grammatical structures, even when our main goal was to remember and list significant characteristics from the readings. This aspect taught us that it is possible for the students to get acquainted with this knowledge when they are exposed to it through different manners and in several occasions.

### **7.3.2. Strength.**

In relation to the linguistic outcomes, another strength deals with students' ability to recall information from readings and input given. Learners were able to recycle vocabulary from the readings they were exposed to in different classes in order to develop other reading tasks in their cooperative base group. During the development of the classes, students were exposed to different topics, in which some vocabulary was showed to the learners in order to develop the reading tasks. These vocabulary was not only used in just one session; instead, we tried to include the vocabulary and topics taught as much as possible when the lessons required it. This strategy of using the vocabulary taught granted to the students to recognize and assimilate the vocabulary after working with it in different sessions and activities. The reason why this aspect is found as a strength relies on the fact that through it, we were able to notice the learners'



understanding and possible progress they had during the process of instruction of the project. In addition, this strength granted us to develop different activities in which students were able to use the information that they remember from previous readings and the new ones to carry out new reading tasks.

In some of the lessons developed, students interacted with a reading about youtubers; students were asked to answer some comprehension questions about the short reading; they answered them in written and oral form. In the written form, students were asked about the nationalities of them and just to write the country they were from while in the oral form students had to say something they could remember or they learned about the reading and the people described as can be seen in appendix 1, (**See appendix 1**). As was mentioned before, students were capable of identifying basic grammatical structures from the readings they were exposed to in the activity pointed out in the appendix 1, the students' task was to read a short biography about some famous youtubers; after that, they answered basic comprehension questions. In order to help students in the first stage, we conducted a socialization in which the cooperative base groups shared some information about this, then in the second stage, the cooperative groups handled the reading task using the knowledge they remember from the socialization and the one given in the reading.

To conclude, we found that even though the students did not understand all the words and vocabulary from the readings, they were able to recognize and remember some significant information and specific details from the readings. From this, we learned that learners were able to learn or at least remember information after sessions of exposure to text that covered topics of their interest. This was found beneficial for the development of the reading tasks because of

learners' appeal towards the topic. In addition, we noticed that when students interact with short readings about topics of their interest, they may have more chances to develop the reading activities since they are interested in the topic and may have more opportunities of understanding the reading because of the topic employed and their availability to interact with a topic they like, which allowed to more interaction and exposure to readings in English.

### **7.3.3. Challenge.**

In the development of this project, we faced some issues in relation to the arrangement of the objectives, features, and the context in which the project took place had. During the implementation of this project, we were forced to arrange our objectives to the conditions that the context had such as students' English proficiency level in order to be able to conduct the project. In some occasions, during the first classes in which the students had the first encounters with the texts and reading tasks, students expressed that they did not comprehend most of the readings and that the tasks they had to develop were too demanding for them. Even in the presentation stage of the readings, students were confused, which caused some issues for students when they had to develop the reading tasks itself. This is recognized as a challenge given the fact that we had to adapt our established objectives taking into consideration the characteristics that we found in the place where it was implemented, losing somehow our main goal of developing reading habits among children. These characteristics had to do with students' low English proficiency level that was sometimes an obstacle for the development of the reading tasks. Apart from this, this arrangement of objectives did not allow us to do some activities due

to their demanding level in terms of English proficiency and that students were not able and prepare to develop.

In some of the lessons, students were asked to look for specific information from the text such as ‘What is Lena going to do on Sunday?’, but students expressed several times during the reading tasks that they did not comprehend the questions asked. For this reason, we decided that students should highlight the activities she was going to do on her free week, having into account the activities that were discussed at the beginning of the class. Due to students’ fear towards the texts given, they could not carry out some of the comprehension questions on several lessons. The questions were too demanding for the students’ level; instead, we decided to ask simple questions that allowed us to know if they understood some parts of the texts, as has been pointed out on appendix 2 and 3 (**See Appendix 2 and 3**). Some of the modifications that we did to the questions had to do with the English proficiency level used in the first reading tasks implemented; we asked questions that had a lot of unknown vocabulary for the students and that without knowing it, students will find the task difficult to complete. After noticing this aspect, we started to use simpler questions that did not demand too much from the students and that were easy to answer, such as: ‘who is happy?’, ‘who is scared?’, ‘who has glasses?’ and ‘who has blue eyes? This can be seen in appendixes 2 and 3.

As was seen on the appendixes, in some sessions our main goals were to implement reading comprehension strategies through questions about the readings, but in order for learners to be able to do the reading activity, we agreed to accommodate the activity to their knowledge and asked them simple questions about the readings, which allowed us to know students understanding. In this way, we were not looking for the development of reading habits, instead,

we established objectives that were achievable like list or identify information from the readings that showed their comprehension of texts.

To conclude, we learnt that it is wiser to work with some elemental objectives and goals that can be achieved by the participants of the project. The previous due to the fact that when the main purposes of the project are not too complex and demanding. It is more practical for the teachers carry out the possible changes and adjustment needed to be done according to the special characteristics of the context where it would be implemented. In the same line, as was mentioned before, from this challenge we learned that sometimes it is necessary and beneficial to consider adapting some aspects that were previously established, in order to conduct the project and to make sure that the objectives can be reachable for students during the process. Even though our first goal of developing reading habits among students was not possible to achieve, we were able to achieve something as important as that. The students were able to answer some questions about the texts and most important, they were able to recognize grammatical structures that showed us that in fact they were able to learn something during the implementation of this project.

#### **7.3.4. Challenge.**

After analyzing the outcomes gathered in the assessment, the evidence points out that working with short, intensive readings to look for details and to provide students with options to answer the questions in such readings, was identified as a challenge. In some occasions during the reading tasks, it was difficult for us to design questions that did not give answers away, that were not ambiguous, and that did not confuse students. Because of this difficulty, there were

some problems when students were answering the questions about the readings. Often, students got lost from the main point of the task because there were some inconsistencies with the options given, and they asked questions and even argued with us about it. This aspect is taken as a challenge given the fact that it made answering the questions from the reading tasks more difficult for students. In some situations, learners knew the answers of the questions, but they had some issues when answering them in the answer sheet.

This assertion is supported by the characteristics of the assessment instruments used. These instruments were multiple choice questions to prove comprehension and identification of information, and due to the simplicity of the language used for assessment, students could guess the answers by looking for similar words among texts and questions. This situation occurred at the moment of employing readings that requested students to identify details or specific information such as actions of what a character was doing in a particular situation and instead of accomplishing this task, students resorted to highlight the words they knew to show understanding of the text without actually performing what they were asked to. **(See appendix 9).**

In the appendix 9, it can be noticed how the students were able to identify the character (written form) from the short text, based on the gist given through pictures. This was carried out in this way because students expressed that the questions asked were too demanding for them and they could not comprehend most of it, even after we gave the meaning of the questions in Spanish, students continued to have difficulties with the options presented.

After realizing this issue, we learnt that it is necessary to have varied assessment instruments to not only verify the understanding and effectiveness of the instructive procedure,

but to include different sources of information to verify if that understanding really comes from the instruction and not from external sources or strategies students may resort to for accomplishing somehow what it is assigned to them. This realization demanded immediate action to avoid unrealistic, unreliable results and the best course of action was to have learners answer the questions based on the readings using more meaningful ways of expression such as drawings of the key details that were requested by the practitioners and matching ideas or situations to specific characters presented in the texts correspondingly.

## **8. Conclusions**

This classroom project intended to identify the results of the implementation of cooperative base groups work on intensive reading strategies among elementary students. It was conducted with third graders who were assigned to long term cooperative groups. The objectives of this project were to identify the most relevant information from readings in a cooperative work group, to list down the key points of a text, to learn to work cooperatively for better results, and to recall information from the texts and restate it in their own words to demonstrate understanding. To accomplish these objectives assigned to students, practitioners exposed students to reading comprehension strategies such as recalling and listing and used these intensive readings for 9 lessons using the PPP model and the backward approach. The reading skill was developed through sessions of reading short texts and identifying specific aspects of characters or situations in such texts, and the use of the cooperative base group work was intended to have learners cooperate to cope with the need of the group as a unity, and to promote

a sense of belonging to help each other when there were classmates of the group that felt overwhelmed by the requirements of the text. The mean used to gather information from the learning and the outcomes was comprehension questions based on the readings implemented during the conduction of the project and observations done by one of the practitioners during the lessons taught.

After implementing this classroom project, the information gathered served to prove that we were able to obtain meaningful results that were important for its development. These results had to do with the positive reaction students had towards the employment of cooperative base groups and PPP methodology for the exposure and approaching process to reading tasks. This was possible as a result of the students' positive reaction towards the implementation of games like hot potato while working in cooperative groups, aspects that lead to their progress in terms of recycling and association of vocabulary to approach new reading tasks. Unfortunately, we faced some issues that affected the development of this project at some point, which dealt with the difficulty of maintaining students' attention while they were working on the cooperative base groups, and the obstacle that resulted from working with the backward approach. In addition to these issues, students' behavior and fear when working with reading tasks in the cooperative base groups made the development of the activities planned difficult, which forced us to adjust the objectives set and to be more careful with the activities we exposed students to. Moreover, in relation to the results gathered regarding the group working strategy employed, it is meaningful to express that students showed progress when interacting with others for educational purposes, and it was noticeable how students support each other during the tasks.

As a result of the implementation of the project, it was noticed that some of the established objectives were obtained. These objectives are related to the students' ability to identify relevant information from the texts such as main characters, emotions of characters and important characteristics of them. In addition, students showed that they were able to recall information like vocabulary from the readings they interacted with during the process of instruction of the project. It was possible to obtain these objectives because of the constant exposure the students had with different reading tasks and the support they had with the topics used which most of the times were recycled. Nonetheless, some of the main objectives of the project were not possible to be obtained. One of the objectives that was not achieved had to do with students not being able to list down main ideas as appear in short texts given their low English proficiency level, which did not allow them to interact with the text in this way. In the same line, one objective that was partially obtained was to encourage discussion among students about the text, which in some occasions was possible in the reading tasks, but in other occasions due to the proficiency level and behavioral issues were not possible to be done.

It is significant to mention some of the most relevant factors that somehow affected the development of the project. One of these factors was the difficulty of selecting appropriate material to the level of the learners considering their age, their proficiency level, the degree of authenticity of the material, and the usefulness the material has compared to what learners consider useful or meaningful. To expand this point, it is necessary to mention that the number of groups or individual students affects the selection of the materials to have appealing classes and engaging texts. With the use of these intensive, short readings, we identified the gaps between



some proficiency levels among students. It became a hard task to select one text to fit all of students' linguistic needs.

Another significant factor that affected the implementation of the project dealt with the employment of cooperative base groups and their usefulness for the development of reading tasks. When working with this strategy, it is necessary to bear in mind that when forming groups, it is more suitable to form the teams with members that have a sort of relation or get along when working. This helps to avoid issues or conflict when they have to carry out the activities. In addition, it is recommendable to form level groups in which not all members have the same abilities and English level proficiency. It is advisable to have mixed groups in which all members can complement each other through their knowledge and abilities. In the same way, it is meaningful to mention that it may be challenging to form long term groups that work properly during the whole implementation process, due to the conflicts that students may develop through the process of the implementation of the project.

Furthermore, it is relevant to bring up that when working with groups and especially with children, there may be some fights and arguments between them regarding who the leader is, how the work should be done or even personal conflicts. For this reason, it is wise to establish some rules about how the group working should be carried out before the establishment of the cooperative base groups.

In addition to these factors, the fear that students felt every time they had to interact with texts and reading tasks made difficult the development of reading tasks and other activities. During the implementation of the readings, students pointed out several times that they did not feel comfortable developing the reading activities due to the fact that they did not have any

experience with reading in English. For this reason, practitioners tried to help them to develop the tasks by conducting guided reading or reading aloud to them sessions, give clues, vocabulary and support the texts by pictures of the main characters or situation and encouraged them to try to read or even pronounce some words in English to help them overcome their fear.

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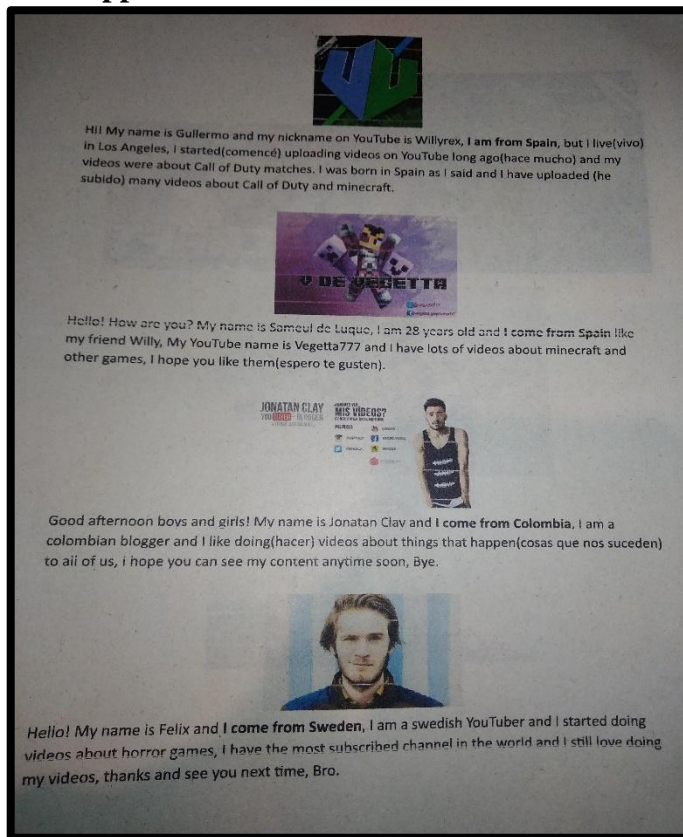
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## 10. Appendixes

### 10.1. Appendix 1:



**Guillermo:** Hi! My name is Guillermo and my nickname on YouTube is Willyrex, I am from Spain, but I live(vivo) in Los Angeles, I started(comence) uploading videos on YouTube long ago(hace mucho) and my videos were about Call of Duty matches. I was born in Spain as I said and I have uploaded (he subido) many videos about Call of Duty and minecraft.

**Vegetta777:** Hello! How are you? My name is Somei de Luque, I am 28 years old and I come from Spain like my friend Willy, My YouTube name is Vegetta777 and I have lots of videos about minecraft and other games, I hope you like them(espero te gusten).

**Jonatan Clay:** Good afternoon boys and girls! My name is Jonatan Clay and I come from Colombia, I am a colombian blogger and I like doing(hacer) videos about things that happen(cosas que nos suceden) to all of us, I hope you can see my content anytime soon, Bye.

**Felix:** Hello! My name is Felix and I come from Sweden, I am a swedish YouTuber and I started doing videos about horror games, I have the most subscribed channel in the world and I still love doing my videos, thanks and see you next time, Bro.

Questions

1. Who is Guillermo?
2. Where is Vegetta From?

Elizabeth tapias león  
R/Willyrex  
A/ is from españa and live angeles

### 10.2. Appendix 2:



**Panel 1:** Hi, My name is Alex, I am from Mexico and I am a superhero. Hello, my name is Ely, I am from Spain and I am a Superhero.

**Panel 2:** Today, I feel very happy because I saved someone. I feel sad because my cat died.

**Panel 3:** I am angry because the bad guys run away. I am scared of the dark.

**Panel 4:** I am really cold in here. There is nothing to do, I am so bored.

**Panel 5:** Ok, I am going to bed too. I feel so good. I'm tired, I am going to sleep.

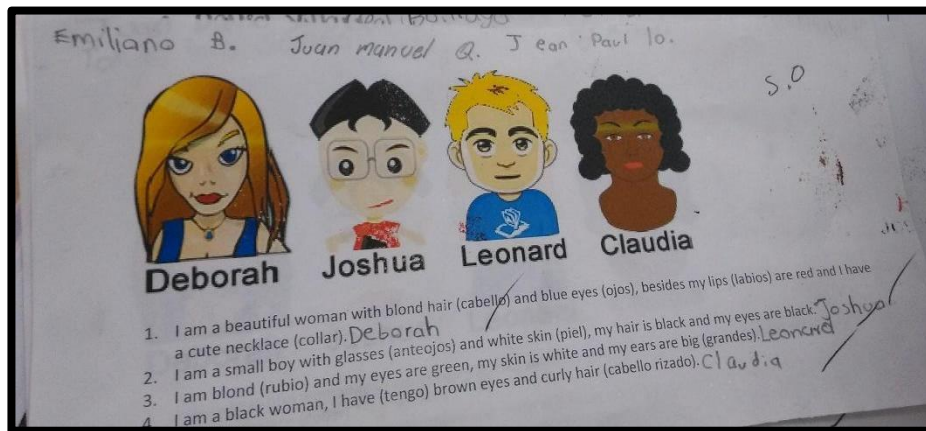
**Panel 6:** Bye guys. Have fun!!!

7R/Ely  
2B/Alex

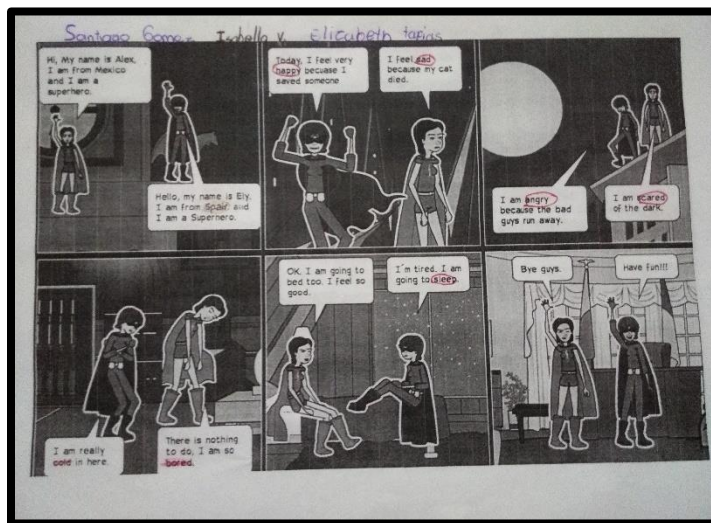
Questions

1. Who is happy?
2. Who is scared?

## 10.3. Appendix 3:

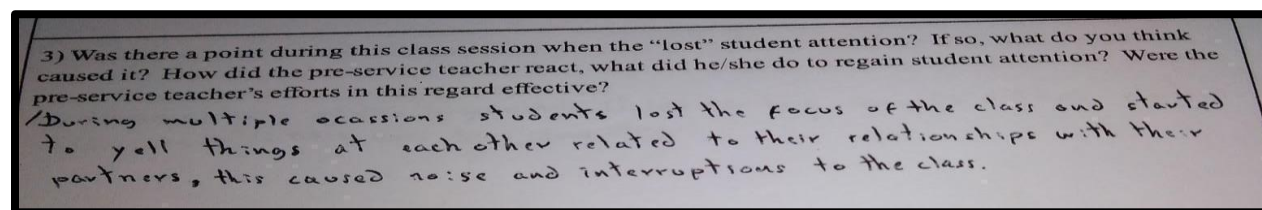


## 10.4. Appendix 4:





## 10.5. Appendix 5:



## 10.6. Appendix 6:

## Lesson Plan 2 Animals

## LESSON PLAN

<b>Date of the class:</b> Thursday, March 9 <sup>th</sup> 2017		<b>Class Number:</b> 2	
<b>AIM:</b> At the end of the lesson the learners will be able to recognize and match descriptions of animals with their respective images.			
<b>Estándares Básicos de Competencias (MEN):</b> <b>Estándar General:</b> Comprendo historias cortas narradas en un lenguaje sencillo. <b>Estándares Específicos</b> <b>Reading:</b> relaciono ilustraciones con oraciones simples. <b>Writing:</b> escribo el nombre de lugares y elementos que reconozco en una ilustración. <b>Speaking:</b> describo algunas características de mí mismo, de otras personas, de animales, de lugares y del clima. <b>Listening:</b> comprendo descripciones cortas y sencillas de objetos y lugares conocidos. <b>Indicadores de logro:</b> <b>Reading:</b> los estudiantes son capaces de emparejar imágenes con su respectivo significado de un texto en inglés. <b>Writing:</b> los estudiantes son capaces de escribir los nombres de los animales en inglés. <b>Speaking:</b> los estudiantes son capaces de describir brevemente los animales en inglés. <b>Listening:</b> los estudiantes son capaces de reconocer descripciones breves en Inglés expresadas por su profesor.			
<b>Assumed Knowledge:</b> knowledge about domestic animals in Spanish, colors, W/H questions			
<b>Materials:</b> flashcards, markers, board, colors.			
<b>DAY/STAGE/ ACTIVITY/TI ME</b>	<b>PROCEDURE TEACHER AND LEARNER ACTIVITY</b>	<b>ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS AND PLANNED SOLUTIONS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>March 9 Warm up 3:30-3:40 pm</b>	<b>Eliciting information:</b> Practitioners will elicit information from students in Spanish about the animals they know, if those animals are domestic or wild and	One issue can be that learners do not remember the colors or animals in English.	



<b>Reviewing</b> <b>3:40-3:50 pm</b>	students will answer with the vocabulary they have in Spanish or English if possible, this to make a word bank of the animals they know for future reference.	Practitioners will elicit information from students in Spanish to be aware if they know about it, then practitioners will share with the learners the information in English.	
<b>(Presentation)</b>	<b>Recalling concepts:</b>		
<b>Introducing Main topic</b> <b>3:50-4:10 pm</b>	After having gathered a certain amount of names of animals, practitioners will proceed to have students come to the board, draw an animal of the list and identify a part of such animal or say a color the animal has on its skin/fur.		
<b>(Practice)</b>	<b>Reading:</b> Practitioners will pass around worksheets that have readings describing animals and several images of the possible animals that match these descriptions, students will be asked to first pay attention to the explanation before receiving the worksheets, and start in their groups reading the descriptions of the animals they have to match with the images. Then, practitioners will conduct the matching activity with the learners. Students must match the description of the animals with the proper image. Students will work in their groups while practitioners will monitor and guide them through the process.		
<b>Final activity</b> <b>4:10-4:40pm</b> <b>(Production)</b>	<b>Animal dominoes:</b> The practitioners will hand in sets of dominoes for students to play, the dominoes contain an image and a name that are different, students will play with the basic rules of domino matching names and images, if students do not know how to play domino the practitioners will explain the rules in Spanish.		
<b>Reflection</b> <b>4:40-5 pm</b>	<b>Reflection:</b> Finally, practitioners will ask to the students about their opinion regarding the lesson, this will be conducted in Spanish. Students must raise their hands to share their opinions about it.		

### 10.7. Appendix 7:

#### Lesson Plan 3 Professions

## LESSON PLAN

<b>Date of the class:</b> Thursday, March the 16 <sup>th</sup> 2017		<b>Class Number:</b> 3	
<b>AIM:</b> At the end of the lesson the learners will be able to identify the members of the family.			
<b>Estándares Básicos de Competencias (MEN)</b> <b>Estándar General:</b> Comprendo historias cortas narradas en un lenguaje sencillo. <b>Estándares Específicos:</b> <b>Reading:</b> Relaciono ilustraciones con oraciones simples. <b>Writing:</b> Respondo brevemente a las preguntas “qué, quién, cuándo, y dónde”, si se refieren a mi familia. <b>Speaking:</b> Respondo a preguntas sobre personas, objetos y lugares de mi entorno. <b>Listening:</b> Sigo la secuencia de un cuento corto apoyado en imágenes. <b>Indicadores de logro:</b> <b>Reading:</b> los estudiantes son capaces de reconocer los miembros de la familia en un texto en inglés. <b>Writing:</b> los estudiantes son capaces de escribir algunos miembros de la familia en inglés. <b>Speaking:</b> los estudiantes son capaces de pronunciar en inglés algunos miembros de la familia en inglés. <b>Listening:</b> los estudiantes son capaces de reconocer los miembros de la familia en inglés cuando son pronunciados por el profesor.			
<b>Assumed Knowledge:</b> classroom commands, school objects, W/H questions.			
<b>Materials:</b> board, markers, flashcards, worksheets, colors.			
DAY/STAGE/ ACTIVITY/TIME	PROCEDURE TEACHER AND LEARNER ACTIVITY	ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS AND PLANNED SOLUTIONS	COMMENTS
March 16 Warm up 2:30 to 2:40 p.m Introduction of topic 2:40 to 2: 50 p.m  (Presentation)   			

<p><b>Reading Activity</b> 3:5 to 3:25</p> <p><b>Practice</b> 3:25 to 3:45 pm</p> <p><b>Final activity</b> 3:45 to 4:0 pm</p>	<p>members that are in the video. For this, the video will be about (familiar) famous families to help the students during the process.</p> <p><b>Reading activity:</b> In groups, the learners will read a short text about the family, in which they have to identify the members of the family and answer some questions about it. The students will have 10 minutes to do it, then practitioners will share with the groups the answers that they gathered.</p> <p><b>Practice:</b> Students will be given a worksheet per group and will try to match the names of the family members with the pictures on the right side. Practitioners will monitor the ongoing of the activity.</p> <p><b>Final activity:</b> Practitioners will ask to each group about the members of their families. Practitioners will say a lot some members of the family while the students will write them down.</p>		
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### 10.8. Appendix 8:

#### Lesson Plan 4 Family Members

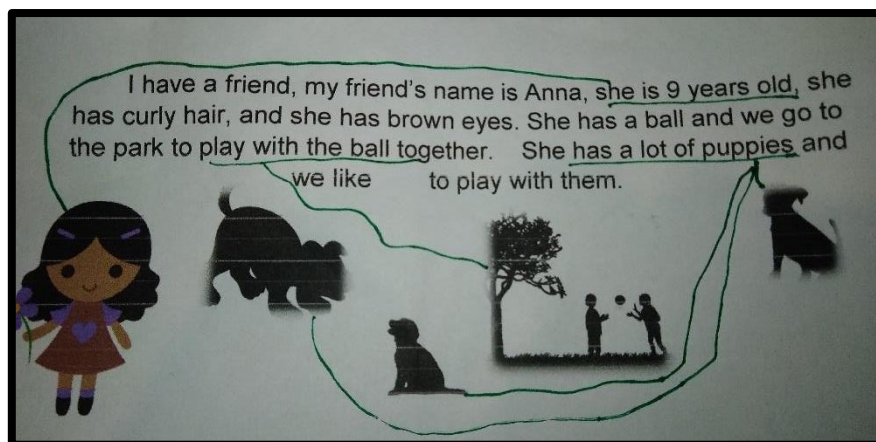
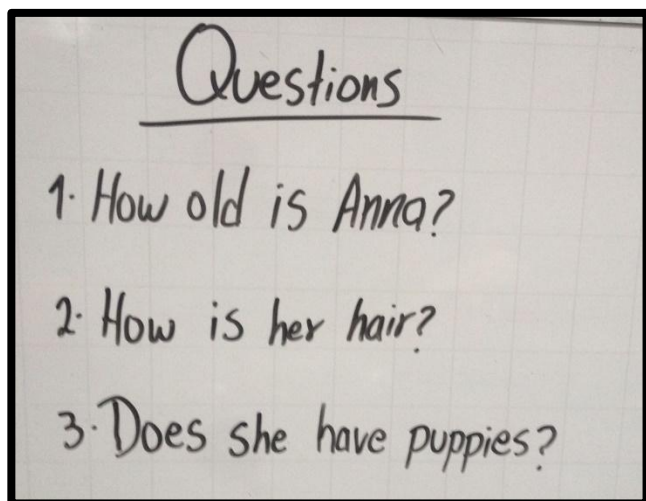
#### LESSON PLAN

<b>Date of the class:</b> Monday, March the 27 <sup>th</sup> 2017	<b>Class Number:</b> 4
<b>AIM:</b> At the end of the lesson the learners will be able to identify certain professions in English.	
<p><b>Estándares Básicos de Competencias (MEN):</b>  <b>Estándar General:</b> Hablo en inglés, con palabras y oraciones cortas y aisladas, para expresar mis ideas y sentimientos sobre temas del colegio y mi familia.  <b>Estándares Específicos:</b>  <b>Reading:</b> Identifico palabras relacionadas entre sí sobre temas que me son familiares.  <b>Writing: Respondo</b> brevemente a las preguntas “qué, quién, cuándo y dónde”, si se refieren a mi familia, mis amigos o mi colegio.  <b>Speaking:</b> Respondo a preguntas sobre personas, objetos y lugares de mi entorno.  <b>Listening:</b> Demuestro comprensión de preguntas cortas y sencillas de objetos y lugares conocidos.  <b>Indicadores de logro:</b>  <b>Reading:</b> los estudiantes son capaces de reconocer en textos cortos en inglés las profesiones y lo que se hace en cada una.  <b>Writing:</b> los estudiantes son capaces de escribir en inglés algunas profesiones.</p>	

<b>Speaking:</b> los estudiantes son capaces de pronunciar algunas profesiones en inglés.			
<b>Listening:</b> los estudiantes son capaces de reconocer algunas profesiones en inglés cuando son pronunciadas por el profesor.			
<b>Assumed Knowledge:</b> classroom commands, school objects.			
<b>Materials:</b> board, markers, flashcards, worksheets, colors, video, Tv.			
DAY/STAGE/ ACTIVITY/TI ME	PROCEDURE TEACHER AND LEARNER ACTIVITY	ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS AND PLANNED SOLUTIONS	COMMENTS
<b>March 27th</b> <b>Warm up</b> <b>12 to 12:15</b> <b>p.m</b>  <b>(Presentation)</b>	<b>Warm up:</b> Practitioners will ask students to mention activities and professions in Spanish for practitioners to write them on the board in English. The, learners will write those professions in their notebooks. On the board, practitioners will write some professions on one side on the board, and in the other side, practitioners will write down what you must do in that specific profession. <b>Example:</b> <b>Students: “Profesor!”</b> Teacher- He teaches For this activity, practitioners will wear the She/He signs that they used in the previous session, in order to let students know what they have to do with the rest of the professions. One of the practitioners will be conducting the activity whilst the other will be monitoring students work and taking notes about students’ performance. Learners must pay attention to the explanation that the teacher is giving and they should raise their hands to participate.	One problem can be that students do not know what people usually do in the professions. For this, practitioners will explain to the learners with examples while using the structure that learners must use in the following activities.	
<b>Word search</b> <b>12:15 to 12:30</b> <b>pm</b> <b>Input</b> <b>12:30 to 12:40</b> <b>pm</b>	<b>Word Search:</b> Students are asked to complete a worksheet in which they must look for some professions. Students will work alone during this activity while the practitioners will monitor and help students. <b>Input:</b> Students will be shown some images of famous people they probably know and the		

<p><b>Reading activity</b> 12:40 to 12:55 pm</p> <p>(Practice)</p> <p><b>Video</b> 12:55 to 1:10 pm</p> <p><b>Final activity</b> 1:10 to 1:30 pm (Production)</p>	<p>practitioners will explain the job of such people in English for students to take note.</p> <p><b>Reading activity:</b> Students will work in groups to complete the activity, they must read carefully the short text that the worksheet has in order to complete it. Learners must identify which profession each text is referring to.</p> <p>Practitioners will explain to the learners what they have to do and they will monitor and help students during the activity.</p> <p><b>Video:</b> Students will watch a video about professions, practitioners will monitor their behavior for students to get the maximum understanding of the video itself.</p> <p><b>Final activity:</b> Students will be asked to describe a profession they would like to have in the future (alone) and the practitioners will restate what students say in Spanish to English.</p>		
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## 10.9. Appendix 9:



**10.10 Appendix 10:****Ethical considerations**

The implementation of a classroom project or a research project is a process that must be conducted in a carefully to avoid harm of the people involved in it, and to evade the achievement of the undesired outcomes. For these reasons and others, it is meaningful to take into consideration the ethics code that will be followed during the implementation of the project, this way, reducing the possibilities of misunderstandings and minimizing risky situations or conflicts. When the ethics codes that the project plans to follow is established it will be easier to conduct the project, but it is necessary to have in mind that if the institution where it is intended to carry it out does not count with an ethics code, we must follow a line of administrative order to make sure that nobody will be harmed during and after the implementation of the project, this includes as well, the manipulation of the information gathered.

Considering what was previously said regarding the ethics codes that must be followed by the practitioners during the implementation of their projects, we consider that in our case we will employ the following ethical principles: demonstrate respect, minimize risk of harm, ensure confidentiality and obtain informed consent.

**10.10.1. Demonstrate respect**

Based on the ideas pointed out by the code of ethics, it is wise and meaningful for us to show respect to the participants during the implementation of this project by all means possible in order to have a proper and warm learning environment. Also, it is important for us to build a secure environment where students feel comfortable when working and interacting with their

partner and the teachers, for this reason we consider that is wise to establish some basic respect rules that only purpose is to look for the development of respect and mutual trust between the participants of this project.

#### **10.10.2. Minimize risk of harm**

In the same way of thought, it is significant to take into consideration to minimize risk of harm when implementing the project or after its implementation. It is impossible to know how to control everything and end the risk of someone getting harmed with the projects or its development, but it is important to be aware of the different scenarios that may happen, and we must be prepared to respond. For this to happen, it is necessary for the practitioners to avoid presenting themes that are not appropriate or at least knowing how to develop the theme without causing controversy or misunderstandings, always being aware of the context in which we are and the participants we are dealing with.

#### **10.10.3. Ensure confidentiality**

Another essential ethics point that this project aims to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, with this we refer to the fact that the names of the participants will not be implemented in order to avoid misunderstanding and harm like was previously mentioned. The participants will remain in anonymity and only their work and activities will be used for the purposes of this project. The most important and meaningful factor that will be employed and always taken into consideration is to always be respectful with the participants and the people that will interact with us during the process. This is the fundamental factor for us given the fact that without respect from one another the implementation of the project will not be possible, for

this reason, personal information or controversial topics will be avoided during the implementation.

#### **10.10.4. Obtain informed consent**

In relation to the factor of obtaining informed consent, we aim for the information that will be given to the participants and their respective parents about the project that we will be carrying out with them. It is important to mention that parents will be informed about their kids' participation, the different activities that are going to be developed, and the purpose of such activities that is educational and academical. If any video recording is employed, no names will be used during the video and kids' faces will not be shown. It will be only used with the purpose of illustrating the activities and work that kids may do during the implementation.

To conclude, we have to stress the fact that the implementation of the project we have revolves around delicate issues such as children's behavior, personal information, and respect for others thoughts including in-service teachers and students. Therefore, it is explicitly important to proceed following the ethics code to have an environment that fosters natural development of the project instead of affecting it with poorly executed procedures by the practitioners and transgressions to other's rights during the implementation.